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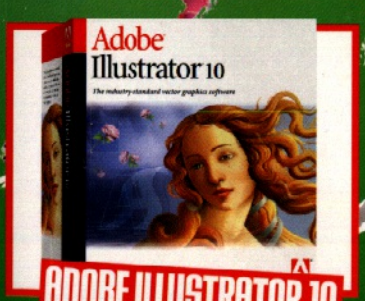

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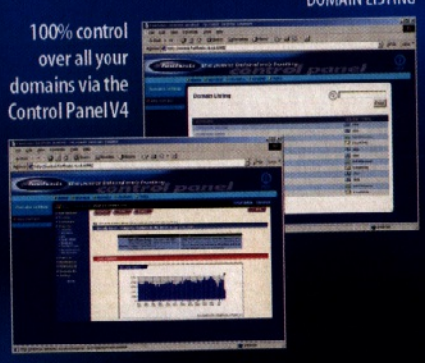

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Welcome

MEET THE PEOPLE WHO CREATE THE UK'S FASTEST GROWING NET MAGAZINE, PRACTICAL INTERNET

Thomas Watson

TECHNICAL EDITOR

Thomas's job is to turn software manual-speak into standard English. Not easy for a man whose first tongue is an obscure Pictish dialect...

James Thornton

STAFF WRITER

Don't be fooled by his boy band looks, James is an old hand at demystifying the Internet's thorniest topics and getting to the heart of news stories

Clive Parker

NET TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

A professional site designer and Net journalist since way back when, Clive fixes your technical fiascos

James Seabright

WEB SITE DESIGN SPECIALIST

Another wunderkind who's youthful looks belie his technical experience, James number two puts together our Home Improvement section

Jo Cole

SENIOR SUB EDITOR

The real power behind the magazine, Jo's tongue-lashings jolt the staff from their torpor so the magazine goes on time

Paul Blachford

SENIOR DESIGNER

Paul's our hangdog designer who works wonders with colours, shapes and lots and lots of screenshots

Chris Ellison

COLUMNIST

A passionate advocate of free speech and liberty, Chris rails against the nanny states who want to run the Net. And lots of other things besides...

MANNING THE PRACTICAL INTERNET helm for an issue until our new editor starts next month, I've been struck by how much has changed and how little has changed since I launched the magazine back in 1997. Take our cover feature for instance, which explains how to deal with the same kind of irritants that were vexing Net users five years ago – viruses, junk mail and snooping software. It's downright annoying that Web browsers still don't come with a little button that can swat these bloody nuisances like flies. Slow access speed remains a problem for many people in the UK too, although it's good to see that BT is taking the broadband bull by the horns and bringing out DIY connection kits. Watch out for more on this intriguing development in future issues of Practical Internet. As for ISPs, while it's true that there's a wider and cheaper choice than ever before, their customers continue to have connection problems, as our help pages show. And what about Web site design for the masses? When is someone going to bring out a cheap, foolproof, reliable Web creation system that's as easy to use as a word processor?

Enough ranting and melancholy reflection. There's lots of exciting new stuff to tell you about this issue. Take video editing for the Web, for instance. Formally a black art requiring a NASA-specced computer, this is now a relatively straightforward process that can add so much more interest to your Web pages. Clive Parker explains how to lob your video clips online on page 30. Then there's the new version of Illustrator, a industrial-strength graphics package that allows Web designers to create some truly amazing effects.

Finally, are you bored with your email program? I've certainly tired of the fussy, officious interface of Outlook Express so discover some cleaner, leaner alternatives on page 36. Why not use one to send me an email?

Geoff Harris, Managing Editor (geoffh@paragon.co.uk)

Inside this issue of *Practical Internet*

Vanquish viruses, spammers, snoopers and other nasties

What you need to add fast loading video to your Web site

Step-by-step tutorials covering essentials like Photoshop Elements

The latest and greatest hardware gets a good going over

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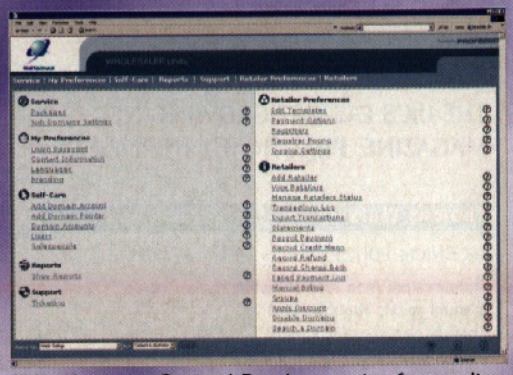

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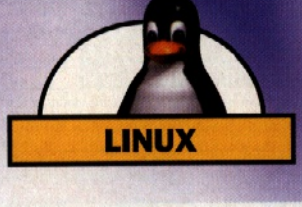
Transfer Limit	1 Gb	1.5 Gb	2.5 Gb	5 Gb	15 Gb
Operating System	Linux	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K
Domain Registration	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited hits	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited Domains	–	–	–	+	+
Full ASP 3.0 (Win2K)	+	+	+	+	+
Python (Linux)	+	+	+	+	+
MySQL (Linux)	–	–	–	+	+ 10 Mb
PHP (Linux)	–	+	+	+	+



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DRAM	128 MB	256 MB
Transfer limit	5 Gb	15 Gb

Plans	Cobalt RaQ4 r	Cobalt RaQ4 r
Prices	£159 per month	£199 per month
Set Up Fee	£99 one time	£99 one time
Hard Drive	2 x 20 Gb	2 x 30 Gb
DRAM	256 MB	512 MB
Transfer limit	15 Gb	15 Gb

Plan Options	Dedicated Office	Dedicated Pro	Dedicated Enterprise	Dedicated Enterprise Plus
Monthly Fees	£99	£199	£399	£499
Set Up	£199	£249	£299	£399
Processor	Celeron 733MHz	Pentium III 933 MHz	Pentium III 1.1 GHz	Pentium III 1.3 GHz Dual
Memory	128 Mb SDRAM	256 Mb SDRAM	512 Mb SDRAM	1 Gb SDRAM
Hard Drive	20 Gb IDE	40 Gb IDE or 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W & 1 x 18 Gb
Raid	N/A	N/A	Mirror	Num 5
Back Up	Customer	Customer	Tape 15/30 Gb	Tape 15/30 Gb
Transfer limit	10 Gb	15 Gb	25 Gb	50 Gb
IPs	1	1	1	1
Operating System	Linux RedHat	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*

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Issue 64

ON SALE 7 FEBRUARY – 6 MARCH 2002

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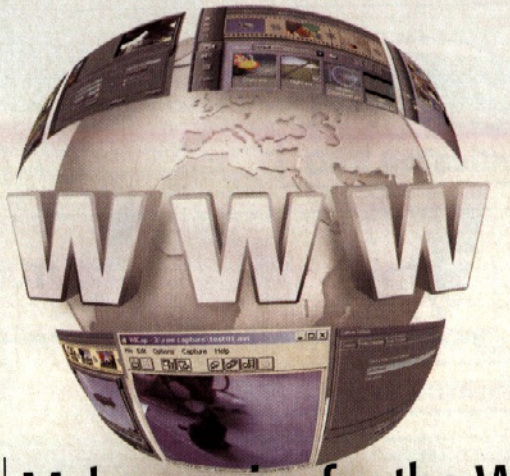

30 Make movies for the Web
Got some footage you'd like to put online? We show you all you need to know

36 Ten alternatives to Outlook
You don't have to use Microsoft's email program, there's plenty of excellent alternatives

Q&A

94 Clive Parker and James Seabright are here to answer your technical Net problems

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127 From the latest software to the most stylish hardware, it's all reviewed here

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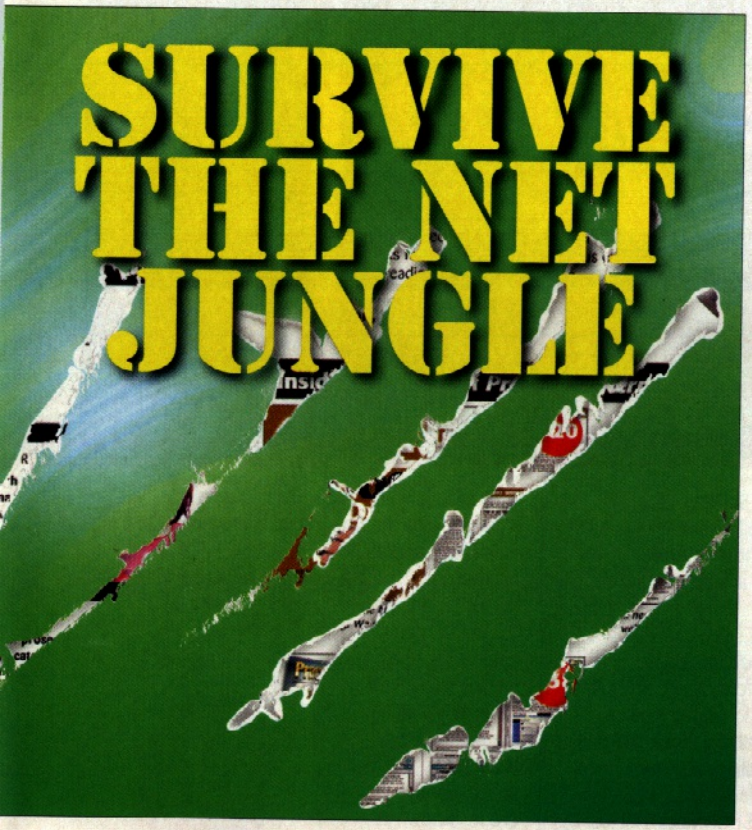
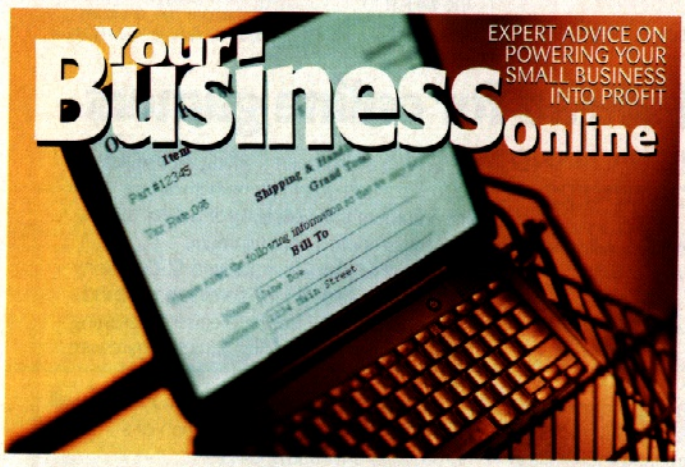


20 Survive the Net jungle
Whether it's ad banners, ISP hassles or spam, we show you how to combat the Net nasties



109 Your Business Online
Small businesses will find inspiration and advice in this section

Tutorials

45 Over 40 pages of step-by-step tutorials to help you get more from the Net

Web Browsing: p46-62

Amongst the myriad of email clients currently available, Eudora is the only one to challenge Outlook Express' dominance. Find out why more people are turning to this excellent package with our four page guide.

Web Building: p64-79

In association with WebFusion
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You don't need to spend hundreds of pounds any more to get Flash quality on your site. With with the help of CoffeeCup's Firestarter, you can build up fantastic animations – and it's easier to use than Macromedia's package, to boot.

Special Projects: p80-91

Generating navigation buttons and bars used to be a problem, until Fireworks came along, that is. Check out our eight page special on creating your own consistent site style within this great program.

News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

TOP STORY

BT heralds 'Broadband revolution'

SELF-INSTALL ADSL KITS WILL BOOST BROADBAND IN 2002, BUT LOWER PRICES AND SHARPER MARKETING NEEDED

GETTING HOOKED UP to a broadband Internet connection looks set to get easier and cheaper in 2002.

BT (**www.bt.com**) is claiming that the UK is on the verge of a 'broadband revolution' after its broadband division, BT Wholesale, released a 'do-it-yourself' ADSL kit. This has been designed to help users hook up to a high-speed connection at a lower cost than ever before.

The DIY broadband kits are now available and allow customers to install the connection themselves instead of waiting around two weeks for an engineer to do the job. This removes the need to pay a £150 installation charge.

"BT MUST FOCUS ON EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT BROADBAND"

Consumers will need to buy their own DSL modem in order to fit the service, which currently retail for around £100. However, prices are predicted to fall if the self-install service proves to be a big hit.

One of the first ISPs to announce its prices was Plusnet (**www.plus.net**) which is charging customers a one-off £58.75 set up fee and £35.23 a month for the service, a clear saving on the previous system.

Several other ISPs are now introducing the kits, including Freeserve (**www.freeserve.co.uk**) which is currently trialling its self-install ADSL service to customers for £29.99 a month.

Make the switch

Up until now, the take-up of broadband services in the UK has been relatively poor. Although over 60 per cent of UK households are now able to access broadband-enabled exchanges, only 1 per cent have taken up a broadband service.

The broadband industry is now waiting with baited breath to see what effect the new developments will have. However, BT is optimistic that self-install broadband will trigger interest in broadband technology, which runs 10 times faster than using a standard modem.

The company's chairman, Sir Peter Bonfield, told *The Sunday Times*: "The investment has been made and the planning is almost complete. Revolution is in the air – and it is up to our industry to make it happen."

BT's Director of Broadband, Bruce Stanford, is equally bullish. "Evidence from other countries shows that self-install gives a huge boost to demand for broadband ADSL services, not just by cutting wholesale prices but also by making installation for the customer as easy as setting up a video recorder."

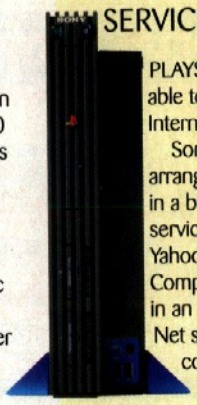
But some analysts are raining on BT's parade by warning that prices still need to fall. According to Daniel Stevenson, broadband analyst from Net research firm Jupiter MMXI (**www.jupitermmxi.com**), "BT needs to drop the price of its own broadband service (currently around £40 a month) and start promoting to the residential market.

"Currently, most people are reluctant to pay the extra £15 a month for broadband over their current unmetered deals due to a lack of compelling reasons to switch. However, as self-install kits become more available and the price of broadband subsequently drops, it now makes more sense for heavy Internet users such as home-workers, families or online gamers to make the switch to broadband."

Jupiter MMXI's Dan Stevenson reckons BT need to bang the drum

Full speed ahead for online gamers

SONY TO OFFER BROADBAND SERVICES FOR P2 OWNERS



PLAYSTATION 2 OWNERS will soon be able to play games via a broadband Internet service.

Sony recently revealed that it has arranged deals with several companies in a bid to create a console-based online service. Under the new agreement, Yahoo! Japan, Softbank and Sony Computer Entertainment will join forces in an effort to provide new high-speed Net services for PS2 users in the coming months.

Sony has also been working with AOL to develop a broadband home networking environment that will allow for deliver of next-generation online entertainment.

Nobuyuki Idei, Chairman and CEO of Sony Corporation said: "In the coming broadband network era, Sony hopes to continue creating new lifestyles by providing attractive hardware and content.

"Through the collaboration [with AOL] we will be able to accelerate the realisation of a broadband environment."

Microsoft's new Xbox console is also equipped for broadband Internet access thanks to its built-in Ethernet port.

shorts

→ Got called up for jury duty? Learn the ropes by making a pre-trial visit to this helpful new juror's site. The virtual courtroom tour at **www.cjsonline.org** allows jurors-to-be to see what a trial involves.

→ Site builders can now receive text messages from their Web site thanks to a new service from Xara Online (**www.xaraonline.com**). The SMS Modules and Data Manager allows users to create feedback forms and mail applications for their site without the need for any programming or scripting.

→ Microsoft (**www.microsoft.com**) is taking the Web to the streets following the release of the latest version of its mobile operating system. CE .Net is designed to allow portable devices such as handheld computers or mobile phones to interact more smoothly with the Net.

Shop your colleague online

NEW WHISTLE-BLOWING SITE RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT MALICIOUS GOSSIP

ANYONE WHO SUSPECTS a colleague or friend of serious wrongdoing can now blow the whistle on them anonymously with the launch of a new Web site.

The site at **www.whistleblower.sh** lets users report suspicions of offences such as fraud or paedophilia without the alleged perpetrator finding out who's made a complaint. Depending on the source of the complaint, the company behind the site, forensic investigation specialists Vogan International, will alert the alleged perpetrator's bosses or even the police.

"We are very experienced at handling investigations of this nature and background checks are applied to check the validity of any dubious claims we might receive," Vogan International's Peter Yapp told *Practical Internet*.

But Chris Ellison of the Campaign for Net Freedom reckons there are privacy issues. "The danger is that if used as a mechanism for involving the police, then the privacy of the individuals involved could be at risk." You have been warned...

1901 site wilts under demand

CENSUS WEB SITE GETS SWAMPED BY GENEALOGY FANS

A NEW SITE AIMED at helping visitors trace their ancestry was forced offline following an overwhelming public response.

Silent star Chaplin appears in the 1901 census

On the first day of its launch, the online version of the 1901 Census attracted over 1.2 million visitors simultaneously. However, the site, compiled by the Public Records Office, was originally only designed to cope with a maximum of one million users a day.

The site, which has been set up to give people the chance to find out about their ancestors and the history of their local area, was pulled down for a week while technical enhancements took place to deal with the heavy traffic.

Among the 32 million individual records contained on the site are entries for the Queen Mother and movie legend Charlie Chaplin. Claude Monet, Florence Nightingale and *Lord of the Rings* author J R R Tolkien are also included within the survey.

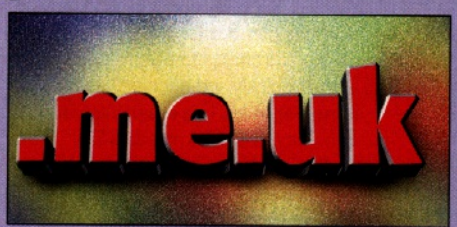
Anyone wishing to delve into his or her family history can visit the site at **www.census.pro.gov.uk.**

It's all me, me, me

NEW PERSONALISED DOMAIN NAMES SPARKS SCRAMBLE FOR REGISTRATIONS

SITE OWNERS CAN now put their own name on the Web following the introduction of the new '.me.uk' domain names.

Nominet (**www.nominet.co.uk**), who currently controls the registry of all Web addresses ending in .uk, has introduced a new secondary level domain (SLD) designed for personal use on the Internet. The new domain names are expected to spark a massive demand for registrations, which Nominet will award on a first come first served basis.



Under the rules of the registration process, the applicant must be either the person named or someone with a reasonable and legitimate claim to the name applied for. Anyone with a very common name is likely to be disappointed, though registration gets easier if you add a few digits – johnsmith22.me.uk for example.

News in brief

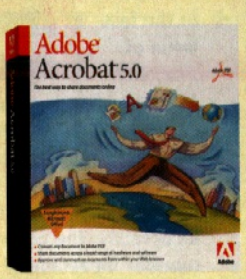
→ **In the last issue of *Practical Internet* we unmetered ISP Free24-7 (www.free24-7.net) on the CD. However, the telephone number that appeared in the ISP information on page 142 was printed incorrectly. The correct telephone number for technical support is 0906 221 1321 and for customer service is 0870 220 3506. We would like to apologise to Free24-7 and to any readers who may have been inconvenienced by this.**

→ SniffOut (www.sniffout.net) has introduced a new prepaid Net access service where users can top up their accounts as they would with a mobile phone. The LiteTime package lets customers buy their Internet access on an as-you-need-it basis with top-up cards available for £5 – £15 online. Features of the service include unlimited email accounts, unlimited Web space plus a portal site containing 15 channels of news and features.

→ **The UK looks set to be the first country to introduce online elections. Leader of the Commons, Robin Cook, has revealed that the Government plans to use the Net to allow people to vote online in a bid to encourage a bigger turn out at the next election. Trials for online voting for local elections will begin this spring and the Government will draw its conclusions from these results.**

→ A teenage Web conman has been jailed after duping visitors to a fake auction site out of thousands of pounds. Aun Sayal was convicted of falsely obtaining around £150,000 by posting adverts for non-existent bargain-priced electrical goods on the Web. The 19-year-old was sentenced to nine months.

News in brief



→ Roaming Internet users can now access Adobe PDF files from anywhere thanks to the launch of Acrobat Reader for Pocket PC. The software can be downloaded free of charge from **www.adobe.com** and allows users to view documents produced in the visually rich file format on their Pocket PC-enabled mobile devices.

→ **Virgin.net (www.virgin.net), the UK's fifth largest ISP, has launched a new unmetered package. Virgin.net 24seven costs £15 a month and offers users unlimited Internet access along with five email addresses, 10Mb of free Web space and free technical support via email.**

virgin.net
Make the most of your free time

→ With the speed of CD writers improving all the time, Nero has introduced a new burning tool to help users get the best performance from their CDRW. The Nero Toolkit is a suite of utilities designed to raise the speed of CD burning and can be downloaded free of charge from **www.nero.com.**

Return of the iMac

ANGLEPOISE-LAMP LOOKALIKE BRISTLES WITH CONNECTIVITY

APPLE HAS REVAMPED its popular iMac range, promising to deliver faster Internet access and tighter integration with digital media devices.

The uniquely compact computer, unveiled at the recent Macworld exhibition in California, is designed around an adjustable 15-inch LCD flat screen monitor mounted above the central processor. This marks the first time that Apple has supplied an LCD screen with a desktop Mac, allowing the user to adjust the screen height or angle with a touch of their finger.

The iMac2 comes with a 700MHz or 800MHz PowerPC G4 processor and a built-in 56K V.90 modem, making accessing the Net through a Mac faster than ever before. Broadband users are also promised quick access thanks to the machine's Ethernet port. Apple has also added greater integration with digital media devices, including three USB ports for connecting the iMac to digital cameras, MP3 players or other peripheral devices. What's more, the new iMac includes the new SuperDrive, allowing users to burn movies and digital photos onto DVDs as well as CDs.

"The new iMac ushers in the age of flat-screen computing for everyone," said Steve Jobs, Apple's Chief Executive. "With its powerful G4 processor and SuperDrive, everyone can now affordably create and burn their own custom DVDs and CDs."

The new iMac range includes three models, starting at $1,299 and further details are available from **www.apple.com/imac.**

Panda pops Net viruses

FREE ANTIVIRUS TITANIUM KEEPS MALICIOUS CODE AT BAY

NET USERS CONCERNED about contracting viruses can protect their machine by downloading a free antivirus program from Panda Software (**www.pandasoftware.co.uk**).

Panda Antivirus Titanium is designed to be 'installed and forgotten about' and boasts an intelligent updates system which takes advantage of Internet connections to provide up-to-the-minute fixes for the latest viruses. The software promises to eliminate all types of viruses quickly and effectively including those transmitted via email, Internet browsing or by downloading files.

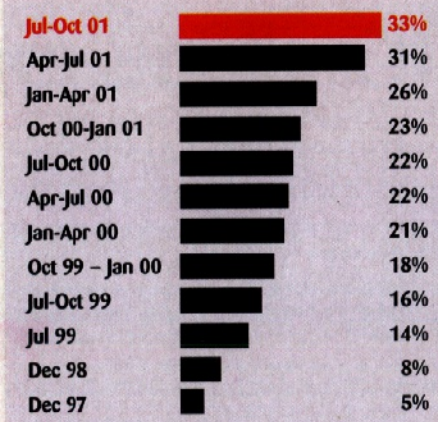
The program also incorporates an assistant that allows suspicious files to be sent for analysis to the Panda Software virus laboratory, which operates 24-hours a day.

Antvirus Titanium can be downloaded from Tucows (**www.tucows.com**) and includes a one-month free subscription to Panda Software's services.

STAT ATTACK

Home Net usage

PERCENTAGE OF UK INDIVIDUALS WHO USE THE INTERNET AT HOME



Source: www.continentalresearch.com

→

Practical internet™
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 7 MARCH

LOOK FORWARD BTopenworld

Now you have a CD to use the internet anytime, you may want to install it anytime.

Some suggestions for when not to install the CD:

- Operating heavy machinery • During job interviews • Driving a bus
- Weddings • Eating fried chicken • On a first date • Taking a shower
- You get the idea.

With BTopenworld Anytime, you can surf the net whenever you like for just £14.99 a month and no internet call charges.

BT. More connections. More possibilities.

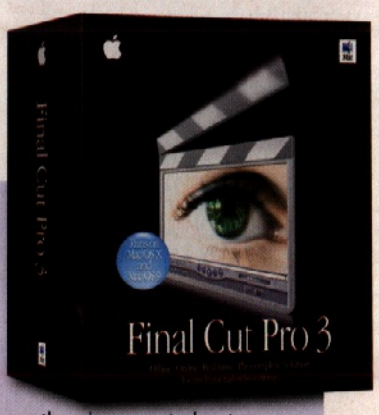
BTOPENWORLD ANYTIME IS A MONTHLY PACKAGE WHICH COSTS £14.99 PER MONTH WITH NO INTERNET CALL CHARGES. PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY CREDIT CARD (VISA/VISA DELTA OR MASTERCARD). REQUIRES A BT LINE. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. BTOPENWORLD AND THE BTOPENWORLD ORB ARE TRADE MARKS OF BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLC.

News in brief

➔ A new online virus is threatening sites that use Flash. Antivirus company Sophos (**www.sophos.com**) has detected a bug that attacks Macromedia Flash files, which is thought to be the first of its kind. The virus, known as SWF/LFM 926 embeds itself into Flash scripts and can spread to infect all Flash files on a site.

➔ **Are you a pub team footballer who still dreams of playing like a Van Nistelroy? Take a trip to Soccer Tutor (www.soccertutor.com) which provides plenty of interactive coaching tips. There's also a free tour, aimed at players and coaches, that allows visitors to view animations, plus videos and course builders. Footie fans visiting the site can also take part in live chat and a discussion forum.**

Cutting edge



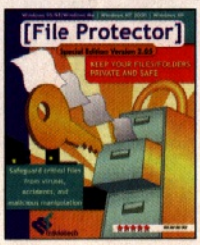
Name: Final Cut Pro 3
Developer: Apple
Price: £829
URL: www.apple.com

THE LATEST VERSION of Final Cut Pro aims to arm Mac users with the ability to create professional-quality, real-time video effects without having to shell out on any new specialised hardware.

Final Cut Pro 3 has been specifically designed to harness the power of a PowerPC G4 processor in order to allow dual-stream real-time effects such as cross-dissolves, titles and colour correction. The finished edited video can then be exported onto the Web.

The software also introduces OfflineRT, an offline format that stores up to five times as much footage as the DV (Digital Video) format, and features professional colour correction tools, usually only available in programs costing thousands of pounds.

Final Cut Pro 3 is available from the Apple Store (**www.apple.com/ukstore**) for both Mac OS X and Mac OS 9 and costs £829.



Protect your assets

Name: File Protector
Developer: Software Abroad
Price: 40 Euros (£25)
URL: www.sastore.com

YOU CAN NOW keep your treasured files and applications safer with the launch of File Protector 2.05.

The software can help you keep files and folders tucked away from prying eyes and can keep them from being altered by yourself, others, or viruses. On top of this, the utility allows you to hide your files and folders as well as hiding and protecting your mailboxes. File Protector also comes with a wild cards feature meaning you can protect, for example, all EXE or DLL files of a folder to be read-only.

The software, which is published by Software Abroad, costs 40 Euros (around £25) and is available from **www.sastore.com**.

Hardwired

Product: Notino 2200
Price: £999+VAT
Contact: www.higrade.com

Supersub scores a winner

Promising to herald a new era in portable computing, the chic Notino 2200 'supersub' notebook gives Net users reliable access from anywhere. Boasting a GHz processor and fully functioned twin-spindle design, the machine manages to run for nearly three hours between charges. A built-in wireless networking antenna ensures the Net is never far away.

Product: Goldtouch
Price: £139.95
Contact: www.keytools.com

RIP RSI

Anyone feeling the pain of muscles battered by RSI can now breath a sigh of relief thanks to this novel keyboard. While it may look like it's been chopped in half, its unique design allows users to split and adjust the keyboard horizontally and vertically to achieve a neutral wrist position. As a result, this helps minimise complaints such as ulnar deviation, pronation and dorsiflexion.

Product: XS-iV S80
Price: £79.99
Contact: www.tdk-europe.com

Speaker to me

While chiefly famous for churning out blank tapes, TDK is muscling into the speaker market with this stylish multimedia system. Thanks to technical wizardry known as SurfaceSound, the flat panel speakers are able to generate sound in so-called 'distributed mode', meaning that the sound field doesn't narrow and deteriorate as the frequencies increase.

Go for promotion

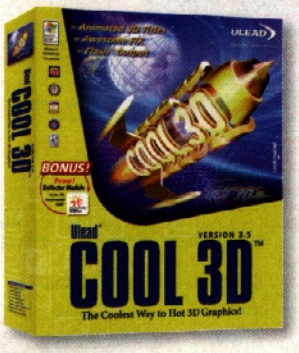
Name: AddWeb
Developer: Cyberspace HQ
Price: $69.99 (approx £48)
URL: www.cyberhq.com

IF YOU'VE JUST completed work on a stunning new Web site, the first thing you'll probably want to do is shout it from the rooftops. Luckily, AddWeb 5 is here to help, allowing you to get your site submitted to a range of search engines with the greatest of ease.

New features include LinkTrader, a system that lets you trade links with other AddWeb users, creating reciprocal link pages designed to promote sites.

The program now also includes 'Pay Engine' support owing to the fact that some important search engines have stopped allowing free subscriptions to their database. This section of AddWeb provides an embedded browser with links to many of the most popular pay sites, allowing you to pick and choose more carefully.

AddWeb 5 Deluxe Edition is available now from Cyberspace HQ at **www.cyberhq.com**, and costs $69.99 (around £48).



Cool runnings

Name: Cool 3D
Developer: Ulead
Price: £45
URL: www.ulead.co.uk

Web site builders can now add some attention-grabbing animated effects to their pages thanks to the launch of Cool 3D 3.5.

The new version of the 3D text and animation utility promises a greater level of flexibility with the ability to import files from Adobe Illustrator as well as the ability to convert existing static images into scalable vector paths.

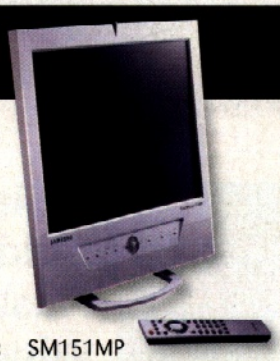
Version 3.5 also boasts Instant Wire Frame Display Mode, which is useful for viewing or animating large objects and doubles as a neat special effect. Several plug-ins have also been added including 'Lightning' which allows for precise control of electrical pulse effects and the ability to tweak opacity, colour, glow weight, dimensions and angle.

Ulead Cool 3D 3.5 is available now for £45 and further details on the software are available from **www.ulead.co.uk**.

Product: USB Web Cam
Price: £55.99
Contact: www.lindy.co.uk

The cam that can

If you're the sort that likes to show their face at every available opportunity, this Webcam is a great way to put it about. Lindy's latest offering uses a high-sensitivity colour CMOS sensor that provides quality still or motion picture captures. The camera can be ready to roll in minutes thanks to its USB interface, and the mounting clamp can support free standing.



Product: SM151MP
Price: £699
Contact: www.samsungelectronics.co.uk

Screen dreams

Telly addicts will love this new all-in-one flat screen monitor which lets you watch the box or play your favourite console game while surfing the Net. All models boast built-in speakers, 3D virtual surround sound, picture-in-picture function and remote control. The device's high resolution promises flicker-free viewing, while contrast and brightness levels ensure readability.

Net watch

Chris Ellison
INTERNET FREEDOM'S SPOKESMAN CASTS A WATCHFUL EYE ON THE LATEST ONLINE DEVELOPMENTS

→ THE BATTLE OVER digital music moves into second gear this year. It is set to be the year of "digital rights management" (DRM).

DRM is a technology designed to limit how, when and where you can listen to music. It all started just before Christmas when record company BMG released a copy-protected Natalie Imbruglia CD in Europe. Similarly, Universal Music Group (UMG) became the first label to sell copy-protected CDs in the US.

BMG's Natalie Imbruglia CD was a dramatic failure as many consumers found the disks wouldn't play at all. But UMG is not perturbed: it plans to copy-protect all CDs by the middle of this year. Their CDs will not be playable on computers, game consoles, or be transferable to MP3 players.

A similar story applies to the big online music venture MusicNet. It will charge users $10 a month, limit them to 100 downloads, and prevent transfer to CDs or digital players. As soon as your subscription expires, the songs will become unplayable. Like BMG, the service has suffered from major technical difficulties.

The industry's plan is to stop people turning CDs into MP3 format. According to Hilary Rosen, Head of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), "the ease of 'ripping and burning' [is] causing artists and record companies real harm". However, according to the RIAA's own survey, 79% of consumers still wanted a CD for Christmas.

Whilst modern computing technologies aim to make life easier and better, DRM is set to make life harder and more restrictive. The flexibility of transferring music between your CD player, computer, and digital player will soon be a thing of the past.

*Internet Freedom can be contacted on **campaign@netfreedom.org**. The campaign's Web site is at **www.netfreedom.org***

News in brief

→Names.co has introduced a new solution for site owners who find themselves stranded without a domain name owing to the closure of their ISP. Names.co is offering to pay the standard £5 fee incurred by any Webmaster seeking to register or renew their URL with a different provider. Details of the offer are available at **www.names.co.uk**.

→Boozy Web users can order a round of their favourite tipple on the cheap thanks to the launch of a new virtual 3D Off Licence. Bargain Booze (www.bargainbooze.co.uk) features an impressive 3D environment where visitors can move around the products and merchandise as they would when playing 3D computer games.

→Parental control software isn't normally associated with breakfast, but Kellogg's and Cyberpatrol reckon it's a good way to get mum and dad's attention. The cereal company behind Cornfakes and Frosties is promoting the parental control program on its packets and offering free trials and price discounts on its Web site at **www.kelloggs.co.uk**.

→Mobile phone owners eager to add a touch of individuality to their handsets should dial into a new service from Coverfrenzy.com (www.coverfrenzy.com). The site allows users to design their own unique, customised mobile phone. The image can be anything from a personal drawing to a photograph of your family and the finished cover is delivered to your door with a free ringtone for £24.99.

Perl for the Web

Author: Chris Radcliff
Publisher: New Riders
Price: £34.95
URL: www.newriders.com
ISBN: 0-7357-1114-3

THIS BOOK IS definitely not one for beginners and is instead aimed at existing Perl programmers who want to improve the performance of existing web applications written in Perl.

The author is an accomplished Perl expert who specialises in using Perl's glue capabilities to integrate applications with database led Web sites. And it shows.

The book starts off with an insightful chapter on problems that can occur on Web sites and offers analysis and troubleshooting tips that can be followed to rectify most problems.

In fact, the first third of the book is devoted to various scenarios that can cause databased Web sites to under perform; this is followed by a series of chapters providing clear solutions to many of these problems.

The final section of the book is devoted to the future of Perl development and integration with new technologies such XML and the growing wireless Internet market. Professional stuff.

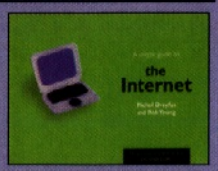
Our Verdict: ★★★★

Whats good:
Professional-level analysis, advice and content for professional programmers

Whats bad:
Clinical writing style may put off some people from reading it

A Simple Guide to the Internet

Author: Michel Dreyfus and Rob Young
Publisher: Prentice Hall
Price: £8.99
URL: www.informit.uk.com
ISBN: 0-130-60291-4



LIKE ALL OF the Simple Guide series, this book is aimed squarely at newcomers to the Internet rather than to new PC users. It is assumed that the reader has enough computer savvy to get a PC up and running and then takes things from there.

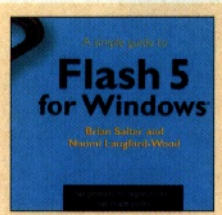
It's a basic step-by-step guide, structured in the traditional way; how to connect to the Internet; making your first connection; browsing the Web; using email; how to use FTP and so on. There's really nothing surprising in the content.

But it is nice to see – once again – that jargon is avoided at all costs unless it is essential to the content of the page. Helpful sidebar icons provide extra facts, advice and anecdotes to add extra value. A good book that is perfect for Internet virgins.

Our Verdict: ★★★

Whats good:
Clearly written, little jargon, big coloured images and a nice price

Whats bad:
Purely for Net beginners, it's no use once you've been online for a couple of months



A Simple Guide to Flash 5 for Windows

Author: Brian Salter and Naomi Langford-Wood
Publisher: Prentice Hall
Price: £8.99
URL: www.informit.uk.com
ISBN: 0-130-61031-3

IF YOU CAN'T get to grips with the more advanced Flash 5 manuals on the market, this book is probably right up your street.

It's one of Prentice Hall's 'Simple Guide' books that aims to offer essential information, tricks and tips in an easy to digest format.

The authors do their job remarkably well. Written in a style where much of the jargon has been replaced with English, this Flash 5 book is just the job for new users.

Using large, friendly coloured screenshots, the book uses easy to follow examples of some quite complicated examples.

The tutorials are useful and practical in nature, and following the examples here is as easy as anything. Definitely recommended.

Our Verdict: ★★★★

Whats good:
Easy to follow, large images, little or no jargon

Whats bad:
Great for beginners but little or no value to intermediate Flash authors

Practical internet

BEST BUY ★★★★★

XML, HTML, XHTML Magic

ELEVEN REAL PROJECT TUTORIALS DESIGNED TO TEACH YOU NEW WEB SKILLS

Author: Molly E Holzschlag
Publisher: New Riders
Price: £27.50
URL: www.newriders.com
ISBN: 0-7357-1139-9

ANY COMPETENT WEB page designer knows full well that the face of the Web is changing – HTML is morphing into XHTML and XML is a growing force online.

This Magic book supplies 11 real projects you can create using the aforementioned markup languages that introduce new skills, new concepts and working methodology to Web page creation.

Projects range from a visual design showcase to building a community site; from creating a professional corporate Web site to creating information-based sites using databases. There's really useful stuff for designers here.

All the Magic books are large format and display information in multi-column format across the page to juxtapose text with images or code listings. This system works well.

One word of warning, this is not an easy read, but although it is targeted at Web design professionals, any reasonably experienced HTML coder at an intermediate level will find something that's of use.

Our Verdict: ★★★★★

Whats good:
Superb content, well presented and informative

Whats bad:
Not an easy read, very technical

bargain HOST.co.uk
AFFORDABLE UK HOST

Big webhosting deals

BargainHost.co.uk provides low cost UK webhosting and domain name registrations.

BUDGET Account 35Mb only £12.99 pa
BUDGET PRO Account 50Mb only £22.99 pa
Budget Pro hosting account includes:
FREE Domain Name or Transfer
UNLIMITED POP3 email accounts
UNLIMITED email forwarding
UNLIMITED auto responders
Frontpage extensions
PHP4 and MySQL database
Password protected folders
Full CGI-BIN and PERL Support
Pre-installed CGI Scripts
SSI (server side includes)
NEW SSL enables secure site
Control panel
Graphical visitor stats
Logs and usage stats
No adverts or popup banners
24/7 FTP access

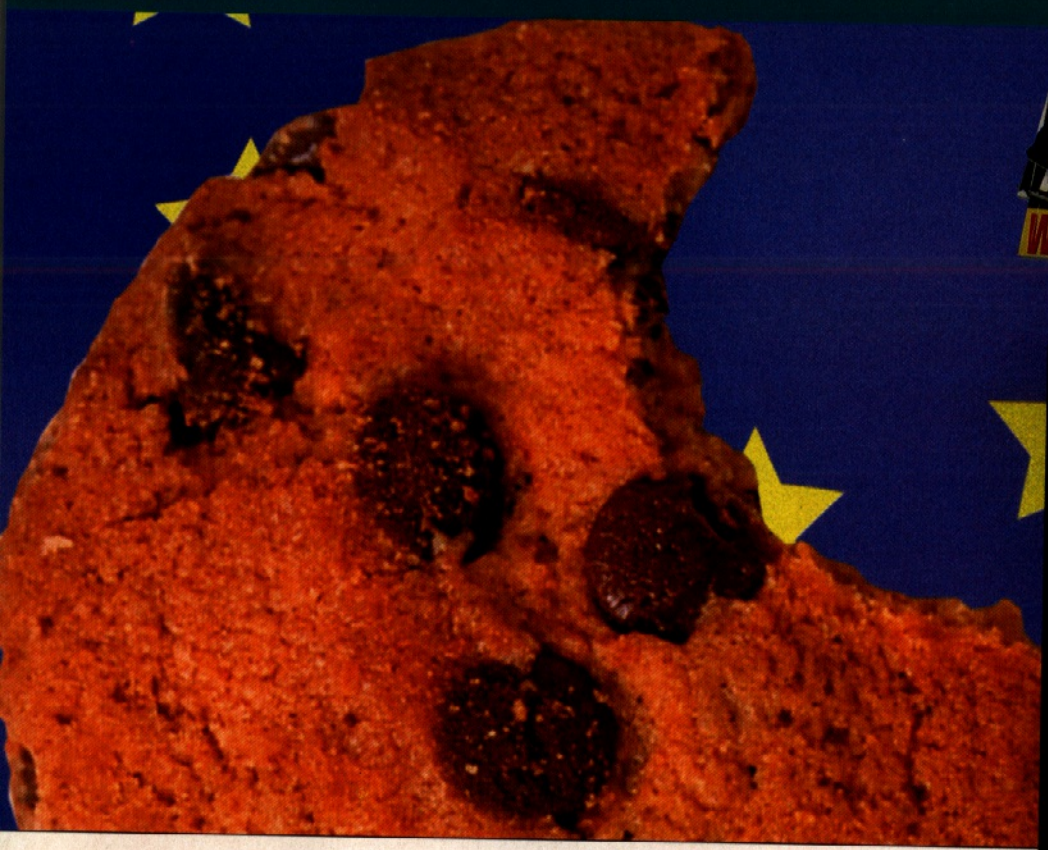
Windows 2000 option available.

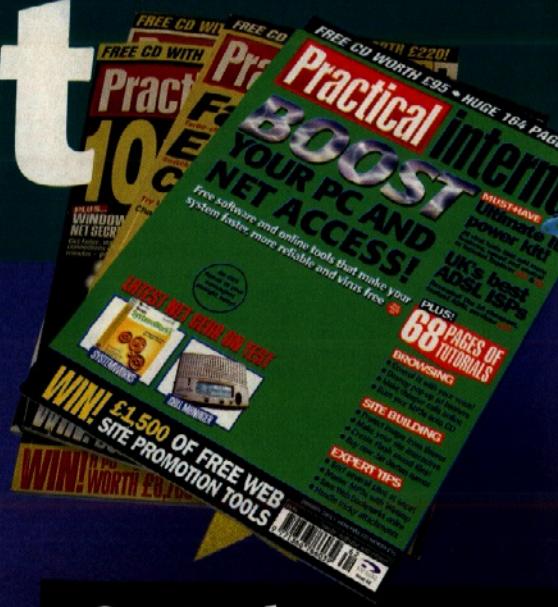
from £12.99 per year

No hidden charges. No added VAT

www.bargainhost.co.uk

Backchat





Cookie monster

I'm writing in response to your article 'Cookies Crunched'. A few ideas have come to mind, in order to create a balance between our freedom and security. I just thought I would share them with you.

1) When I visit a particular site, I should be given the choice to enable or disable an option which should read: 'Track My Surfing Activities On Your Site' or 'Do Not Track My Surfing Activities On Your Site.' This will then become a mutual agreement between I, the user (victim) and the relevant sites (marketing sharks).

2) Alternatively, cookies should be made much more legible and understandable to me, which will enable me to chose which one of these cookies should be sent. If they are going to be shared (sold) to other sites, I would like to know whom to. I don't want to be sent such info everyday, therefore, how about a monthly report, or even a 2 weeks report? – I will then edit and change what I don't want you to share 'sell,' then return the report back to the company, for whatever my info was gathered for. Then, when I do that, I would like to…

3) Be rewarded by different schemes for accepting to share my activities info with you. For instance, I would love it if for each 10 cookies I agree to send or submit, receive some credit, be it money, gift certificate, free subscription to magazines or other things.

4) Receive a monthly report telling me which companies got the pleasure of acquiring (purchased) my cookies.

5) Be aware that there is a difference between commercial cookies tracking and email activities tracking – see below.

For people who are concerned about their privacy online, I'd like to say this:

If you are concerned that the government finds out your are cheating on your partner, then don't do it online. If you are concerned that the government finds out you are cheating in your tax report, then don't do it online. If you are concerned that the government finds out you are a paedophile or sex offender then don't do it online, better yet, don't do it at all

Mr. Ben Daoud

You raise some interesting points Ben, but cyber-liberty issues aside, are cookies really such a big deal anymore? If you find them annoying, simply upgrade to the latest Internet Explorer via our CD, which lets you manage them with ease. Or check out the massive selection of third-party cookie crunchers available for download at shareware sites such as www.download.com. Your final points ring true: most Net users get steamed up about cookies when they're sent from sites they feel guilty about visiting in the first place.

Contacting us

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE MAGAZINE OR THE INTERNET IN GENERAL? HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. EMAIL US AT **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR POST YOUR LETTERS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY TO *PRACTICAL INTERNET*, PARAGON PUBLISHING, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS

Competition winners

Congratulations to issue 62's winners, who each get an SMC Network Starter Kit. They are John Collinge of Blackpool, Mark Fouet of Southampton and Amy McInnes of Helensburgh. Your prizes will be winging their way to you shortly.

Letter of the month

Every month, the best letter we receive will win a splendid ZoomCam Webcam (pictured above). The camera is ideal for all sorts of multimedia applications including video capture, video mail and videoconferencing. Available in USB, PPC or ISA versions, these cameras are perfect for bridging the gap between distant family, friends and colleagues.

Reader's tip

→ **BookBrain**

I find it tricky to know which site has the best deals. I find the easiest way to find out is using a price comparison service, such as BookBrain (www.bookbrain.co.uk). Just type in the title of a book to see a list of how much it costs on different sites.

Nick Bennett

Your letters

Letter of the month

Eudora cock up

I use the Eudora email program and had recently just finished composing some mail to a friend. Suddenly there was a racket from the bottom of the garden as a pheasant took off at the approach of Concorde over the sea. This always happens and of course, they hear it about five minutes before we do. So, I put this little bit of info in the mail but actually mentioned a cock pheasant to be completely accurate. On sending the mail, a window popped up and warned me the content could cause offense to the average reader.

So, what to do. Well I substituted 'cock' for 'dick' with no problem

So in future everyone must take great care, if they mention anyone from a certain English town, they must be inhabitants of Dickfosters... Pearly Kings and Queens are Dickneys... and the jolly little bird on the Christmas cards is a Dick Robin and finally, because this is all too much, that famous fortified wine is...altogether now... Dickburns. Look out, here comes the pop up window – told you!

Terry Butcher

Sounds like a dick and bull story to us...

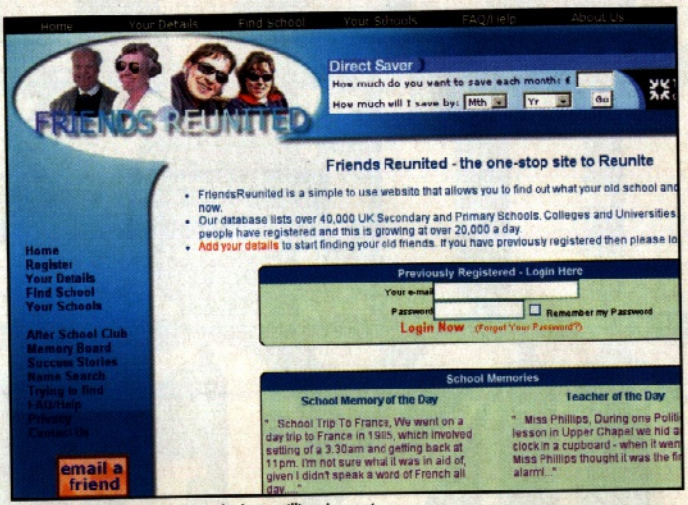
A cock pheasant, or just a dick?

Can I get rich quick?

Thanks for some great tutorials on site building. The Your Business Online section is always helpful, too. One question, do you still think it's possible in this day and age to come up with a great idea for a Web site in your back bedroom and then sell it on for millions? Or are the .com days well and truly over?

Trevor Yorke

Yes and no. You're right that there aren't the armies of rich, gullible investors there were around the end of the last century, eager to buy into anything with Net in the name. Take the example of Friends Reunited, a massively successful site attracting tens of thousands of new registrations a day. It's a hit site by any yardstick, but it's still being run by Steve and Julie Pankhurst from their North London semi – a couple of years ago they'd have been besieged by buy-out offers. But Friends Reunited also shows that if you come up with a good idea for a site, people will be drawn to it, and eventually your success will be noticed. Good luck!



A massive hit, but nobody's made them millionaires yet

Virus vitals

Can you give me a straight answer please, as I'm sick of getting the runaround from my ISP and local computer shops. Is there one simple way of keeping my computer free of viruses? I've just spent nearly £1,500 on a new system and I'm terrified it will get messed up if I find myself on the wrong Web site at the wrong time.

Dick Foad

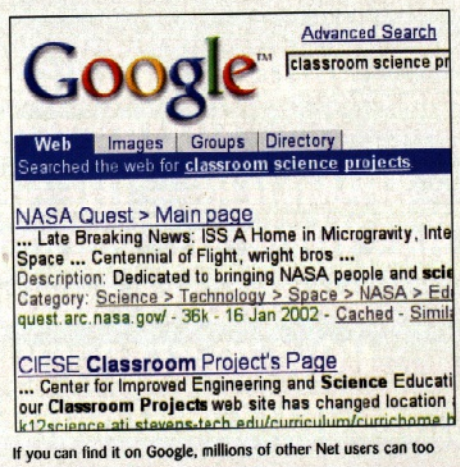
Thomas Watson, Technical Editor: "Spending around £40 on a quality anti-virus program should sort you out. Norton's Anti-Virus suite (www.symantec.co.uk) keeps tabs on everything that enters your system, and will provide you with the piece of mind that you require. Also, McAfee (http://uk.mcafee.com) does a good line in antivirus programs, which deal with all kinds of attacks. You can update either of these on the Internet, to ensure that your program copes with the latest trojans and worms."

Classroom cheat?

I'm doing a teacher training course and have a ton of academic work to do. For one of my projects, I've got to write about the best way to teach science, and I've found a great school site which contains all the information I need. If I just lifted it, what are the chances of my college finding out, considering how many millions of sites there are on the Net these days!

Anonymous

It's impossible to say whether you'll get found out – if it's such a good site, lots of other people in the teaching field have presumably come across it, too. If you do get rumbled, you'll get penalised for plagiarism and it'll undermine the credibility of the rest of your work. Don't rely on the Net to do the leg work for you – it's fine to quote from appropriate Web sites but don't lift stuff wholesale. Nobody regulates the quality of all the information on the Web, either, as lots of students, researchers and journalists have found to their cost!



If you can find it on Google, millions of other Net users can too

SURVIVE THE NET JUNGLE

VIRUSES, HACKERS, FRAUDSTERS, SPAMMERS – THE NET HAS THEM ALL. ROLAND WADDILOVE SHOWS HOW TO KEEP YOUR SECURITY AND SANITY

One of the best features of the Internet, and also one of the worst, is that nobody controls it and nobody polices it. This has ensured that there is a rich variety of entertainment, resources, communities and information online and it has become a part of our everyday life. However, it also enables tricksters, fraudsters, pranksters and even criminals and other undesirables to roam freely. When you log on to the Net you need to keep your wits about you and be conscious of security.

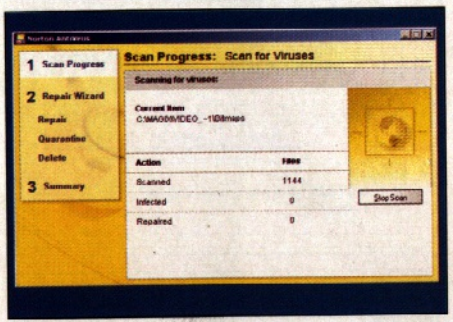
Lest we scare off half our readers, let us just say that these people are a very small minority of the online community and online life is about as safe as in the real world. You keep the front door locked to keep out burglars who try to steal your property, you don't give out personal information such as your name, address and bank details to strangers and you visit the doctor to get a flu jab each winter so that you don't catch any nasty viruses.

If we behave in the same way online then there will be few problems. Antivirus software protects us against the bugs, fraudsters are easily spotted and avoided, a firewall keeps out trespassers and we bank and shop at well known places that offer a secure environment. With that in mind, here's a guide to surviving online.

VIRUS PROTECTION

THE EASE WITH which files can be transferred over the Internet and the huge number of computers online enables viruses to multiply faster than ever. A particularly virulent strain can spread across the globe in a day and new viruses hit the headlines almost every month. Goner, Nimda and others have recently brought companies to their knees and delivered misery to individuals.

The good news is that protecting yourself from a virus attack is not that difficult. In fact, some of the most widely publicised have spread because of human nature and curiosity more than the bug's ability to replicate. Let's face it, who can resist the temptation of Anna Kournikova in the buff? The golden rule is never run any programs attached to emails. Email attachments don't always look like programs and they can be scripts that are run by software on your PC, so all attachments should be treated with suspicion. Downloaded software can also contain viruses and you need to take care whenever running any program sourced from the Net.



Norton Antivirus is one of the leading scanners that also protects downloaded software and emails

AVG AntiVirus is a free utility that provides comprehensive protection against all manner of viruses

Antivirus software is pretty much an essential accessory these days and two of the most popular are McAfee Virus Scan and Symantec Norton Antivirus. Both of these programs will protect you from viruses attached to emails and they can be used to scan software you download from the Internet before you run it. They can also be updated over the Internet so they can detect the latest viruses and the process is very simple.

If you'd prefer, you can download a pretty good antivirus program from **www.grisoft.com/html/us_index.html** which is completely free. More free virus killers can be found at **www.symantec.com/avcenter/tools.list.html**.

Descriptions of the latest viruses can be found at **www.symantec.com/avcenter** and a list of virus hoaxes is at **http://antivirus.about.com/library/blenhoax.htm**. There are thousands of viruses, but many only exist in the lab. Go to **www.wildlist.org/WildList** to read the list of bugs found in the wild.

VIRUS CHECKLIST

HOW DO YOU know if you are infected with a virus? Well if your anti-virus software says that you have a virus, and names it, then you probably do. If it doesn't name it, and you have activated the name searching facility, then it's probably a false alarm. But there are clues. First, if any item of hardware stops working, even though you've not touched it or changed its software drivers, then turn the whole PC, along with the peripheral, off and back on again to see if it starts again.

If not, re-install the drivers and repeat the last test. Finally, replace the misbehaving hardware with an item known to be working.

Has a program stopped working or begun behaving erratically? Does stopping and re-launching cure it? Does re-installing cure it? Are other programs affected?

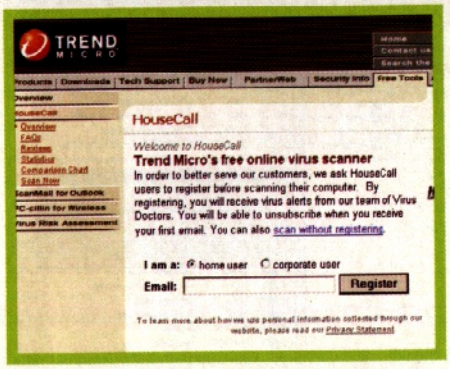
Are you getting strange messages and/or weird effects on screen? If so, it's probably a joke program. These don't reproduce, don't cause damage and have to be run locally, usually from Autoexec.bat. Check it.

Have your files begun to disappear or become corrupt? This is serious and could indicate either a virus, a dicky hard drive or an operating system corruption.

Has your hard drive become inaccessible? If you can reformat the drive and re-install your operating system, it could be a virus.

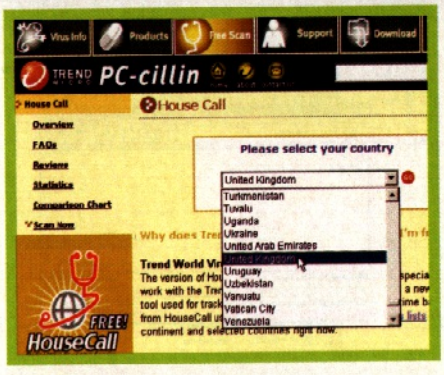
Obviously, the best way of dealing with viruses is to install antivirus software. It could save your PC.

GET YOUR VIRUS CHECKUP



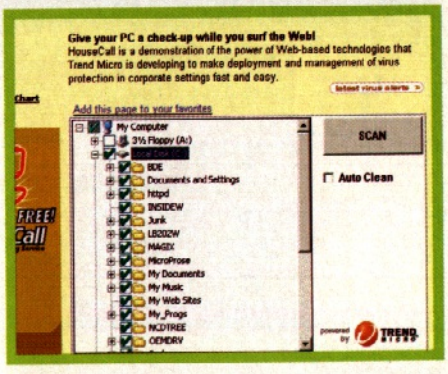
1 Get a free virus checkup

Check the health of your PC by pointing your Web browser at **http://housecall.antivirus.com**. Select the Home or Corporate User option and then enter your email address into the box. Click the 'Register' button to continue.



2 Select your country

The next screen describes how the scanner works and what information is collected. You need to select your country from the drop down list. This is so that if a virus is detected, the company knows where in the world it was found.



3 Scan your PC

The virus scanner will be downloaded to your PC so be patient. Agree to any prompts to install programs. Eventually this screen will appear and you can choose what to scan. Tick the hard disk and click the 'Scan' button.

BLOCK SPYWARE AND COOKIES

FILTER COOKIES

THE USE OF cookies across sites is just one aspect of the Web which raises questions of privacy over users' online activities. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act has made it easy for workplaces to snoop on employees to see where they're surfing in office time. To some extent, this is sensible – after all, you don't want to be liable for your workers downloading pornography – but it creates a culture of surveillance, where looking at recruitment sites, for instance, marks you out as disloyal to the company. In addition, many ISPs implement their own filters to restrict access to 'unsuitable' sites, many of which aren't particularly objectionable.

To regain control, it's possible to use an external proxy to shields your identity from sites, and prevents snoopers from logging or restricting access. The most famous of these is Anonymizer (**www.anonymizer.com**), which is free for general Web surfing.

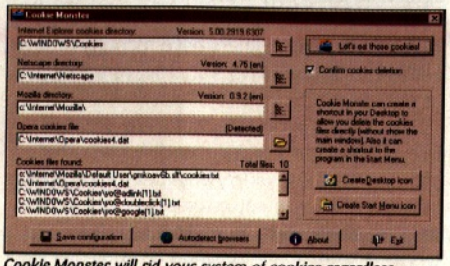
*Escape the grip of cookies by installing a program such as Anonymizer (**www.anonymizer.com**)*

SPYWARE IS LITERALLY software that spies on you. It often hides so that you can't see it, and it monitors what you do then reports back to its owner on the Internet. You may be surprised to discover that people and companies are constantly watching you when you are online. What's more, the traffic is not just one way as spyware can download information, too. Of course, this is an infringement of privacy, but sometimes it is acceptable. Many programs available for download on the Internet are free and the programmer or company makes money by placing an advertisement banner in the program then tracking what you have seen and anything you have clicked on. If you want free software, then you must put up with spyware.

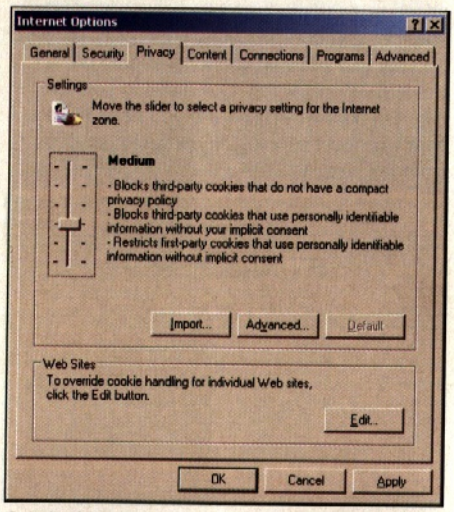
It may be acceptable when the software warns you what it does before you download it because then you have a choice, but sometimes spyware is installed without your knowledge or consent. Fortunately, there is a free tool that enables you to spy on the spyware. Ad-aware, from **www.lavasoftusa.com**, is able to detect spyware on your computer and it will remove it. You may find that the odd freeware program stops working, but if you really need it, you can re-install it.

Cookies are small files created by Web sites to hold information about you. They are stored on your hard disk drive and (theoretically) only the Web site that created them can access them. Still, you may not want Web sites tracking what you do and storing your personal details. Internet Explorer 6 has six levels of cookie security, ranging from completely blocked to full access. Select 'Tools', 'Internet Options' and go to the 'Privacy' tab. Drag the slider to the preferred security setting.

Free cookie crushers include Cookie Eater (**www.dittotech.com/Products/CookieEater**), Cookie Monster (**www.angelfire.com/electronic/ampsoft/english/Utilities.html**) and Cookie Monster 2 (**http://products.jlyne.com/cookie_monster.html**).

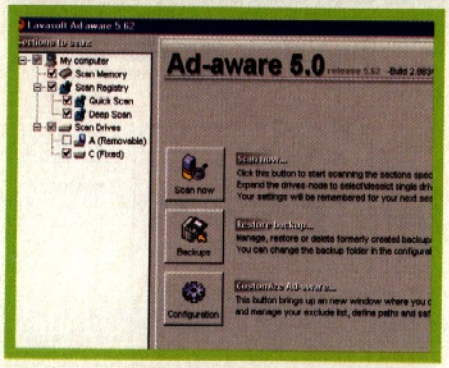


Cookie Monster will rid your system of cookies regardless of whether you use the Internet Explorer, Netscape or Opera Web browsers



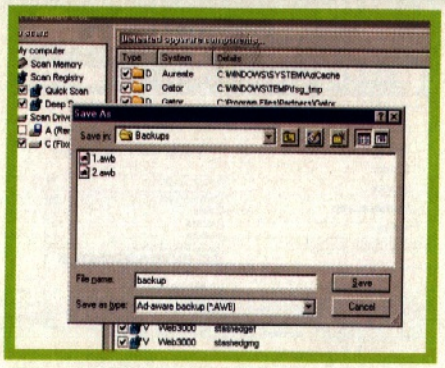
Go to 'Tools', 'Internet Options' in Internet Explorer and select 'Privacy'. Cookies are blocked by dragging the slider to the top

INSTALLING AD-AWARE



1 Install and run Ad-aware

Download Ad-aware from **www.lavasoftusa.com** and install it. Run it and this simple menu screen is displayed. Click 'My Computer' on the left to select everything in the list and then click 'Scan Now'. Scanning takes a long time.



2 Back up the changes

When Ad-aware has finished you will see a list of spyware that has been found on the hard disk. Tick all the items you want to remove (usually everything), and then click the 'Backup' button. Select a folder and give the backup a name.

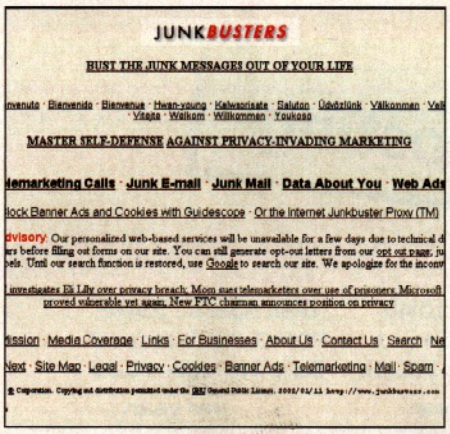
3 Remove the spyware

After making a backup you should click 'Continue' and then 'OK' when prompted to remove the spyware. If any programs don't work, you can reverse the changes by restoring the backup using the button on the main screen.

STOP SPAM

SPAM IS THE electronic equivalent of the junk mail that lands on your doormat every day. Much of it has the same content, such as loans, mortgages, credit cards and get rich quick schemes. Some spam though, can be far more offensive, containing explicit invitations to pornographic Web sites. Not only is this distasteful, but spam eats up space in your email Inbox and you waste time downloading it and deleting it.

You may wonder where all the spammers get your email address from. If you have ever signed up for anything on the Internet and have given your email address, it's entirely possible that it has been sold as part of a database to almost anyone, such as marketing companies. Some email addresses seem to attract more spam than others and AOL and Hotmail users attract spam like a honey pot attracts bees. Fortunately, both services provide help in combating spam, although their efforts are far from perfect.



There is plenty of advice and tips for preventing spam and for getting off spammer's lists at www.junkbusters.com

Sign up for Spam Motel and use it to discover who is passing on your email address and to block spammers

Log on to your Hotmail account and click the 'Options' link. Go to the 'Junk Mail Filter', Junk Mail Deletion' and 'Block Sender' links to get rid of the spam. If you're using AOL, select 'Customise', 'Screen Names' and then choose 'Edit Parental Controls'. When you click the 'Email' button, you will see a menu of options for blocking spam, such as creating a blocked senders list.

An excellent service is Spam Motel (**www.spammotel.com**). This freebie can be used whenever you have to sign up for anything on the Web and give your email address. Spam Motel creates a special and unique email address that you give instead of your real one. Then, when a spammer sends you junk mail, you will know exactly who is sending it or which company passed on your email address. You can block the spam to the Spam Motel email address and then make a complaint to the company that passed on your details.

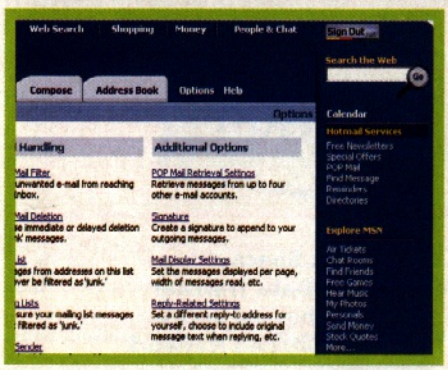
SECRET SURFING

IF YOU HAVE a proper email program, a good way to avoid clogging up your Inbox with spam is to set up a Web-based email account for when you're completing online forms. This way, you can at least cut down on the amount of spam that goes into your 'real' Inbox, helping to reduce the traffic on your ISP's mail serverp.

You can sign up for free Webmail with a whole host of services and it's normally best to use an alias instead of your real name. Keep a note of the information you enter so that you can supply the same details elsewhere when required.

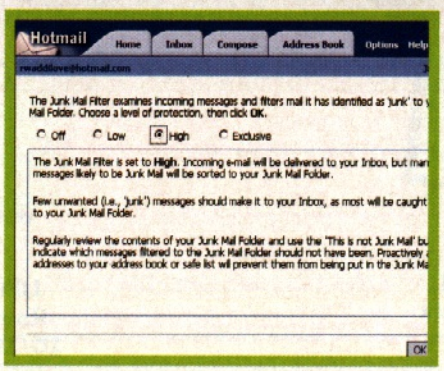
Another effective Web-based application that'll help keep annoying messages at bay is SpamEx (**www.spamex.com**). This email forwarding service allows you to give a different incoming email address to each site that asks you for online registration information. All of the mail that is posted to these various addresses is then forwarded on to your real email address. Then, if you start receiving unsolicited mail, you can pull the plug on the culprits simply by 'turning off' the address that is receiving the offending messages with SpamEx.

REMOVE SPAM FROM HOTMAIL



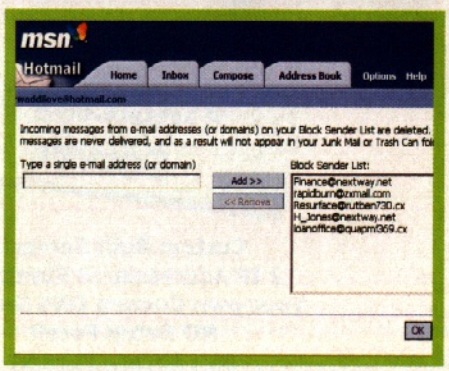
1 Hotmail's spam options

Log on to your Hotmail account and click the 'Options' link to the right of the tabs. In the Mail Handling section are all the filters and junk mail handling options. These enable you to define what spam is and what to do with it.



2 Set junk mail filters

Click the 'Junk Mail Filter' link to go to this page. Hotmail can detect many forms of spam and can automatically move it from your Inbox to a special junk mail folder. The spam is automatically deleted after two weeks in the junk mail folder.



3 Block the spammers

Select the Block Sender List on the options page and you can enter the email addresses of spammers that manage to get through the automatic filter. Enter their addresses one at a time and click the 'Add' button to add it to the list.

Hi-Speed Internet Connections
Red Hat Linux or Windows 2000
Apache or IIS 5.0 Web Server
Frontpage 2000 Extensions
PHP 4 or ASP Scripting available
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SSI (Server Side Includes)
Real G2 Streaming Support
MySQL or MS Access Database
SSH Shell Access (Linux)
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Web Sites : 20
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POP-3 Mailboxes : 1000
Data Transfer : 10Gb
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Hosting

Basic Account
Disk Space : 10Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 1
Data Transfer : 500Mb
£35 per year.

Economy Account
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POP-3 Mailboxes : 2
Data Transfer : 1Gb
£50 per year.

Senior Account
Disk Space : 50Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 5
Data Transfer : 2Gb
£125 per year.

Executive Account
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POP-3 Mailboxes : 10
Data Transfer : 3Gb
£200 per year.

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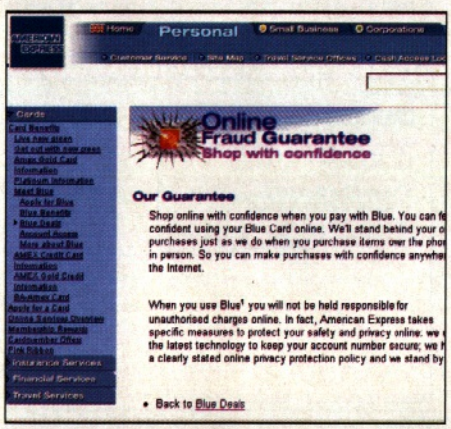
ONLINE FRAUDSTERS

AS THE INTERNET increases in popularity, so the number of cases of online fraud increases just as rapidly. Fraud on the Internet is not that different to ordinary fraud and there are get-rich-quick schemes, investments that give fantastic returns, top rated brand name goods for sale by fictional companies and much more. Internet scams are much better for the fraudsters because it is so easy to email thousands of people and the costs are negligible. The fraudster can be located anywhere in the world and is hard to trace. In the real world there are envelopes to buy and postage to be paid, adverts in newspapers or magazines and so on.

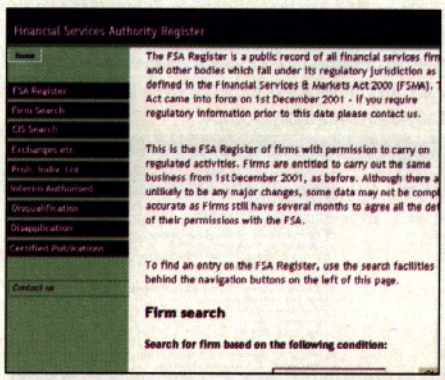
The old saying, 'If it sounds too good to be true then it probably is,' will stand yourself in good stead. Ignore emails that promise easy money. If you invest in an online get-rich-quick scheme then the only person who will make any money is the fraudster. Delete emails promising investment funds, pyramid schemes and foreign exchange services. Companies offering investments should be authorised by the Financial Services Authority so check them out at **www.fsa.gov.uk.**

When buying goods over the Internet you should know who you are dealing with. Anyone can set up a convincing Web site with a .co.uk address and secure server to take credit card details and there have been copycat sites that pass themselves off as well known businesses. Before handing over credit card details make sure you know the company address and telephone number. Call them or even call directory enquiries to see if the phone number matches the address.

Some credit card companies, such as American Express, provide an online fraud protection guarantee so that you won't be held responsible for any unauthorised charges. Useful links include Scambusters (**www.scambusters.com**) and Cyveillance (**www.cyveillance.com**) and the Top 10 Dot Cons (**www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/dotcon**).

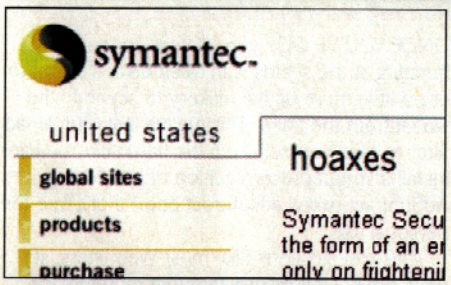


Use a credit card that protects you when you shop online, such as with American Express



Tempted by a get-rich-quick investment scheme? Check out the company with the FSA first

RESOURCES



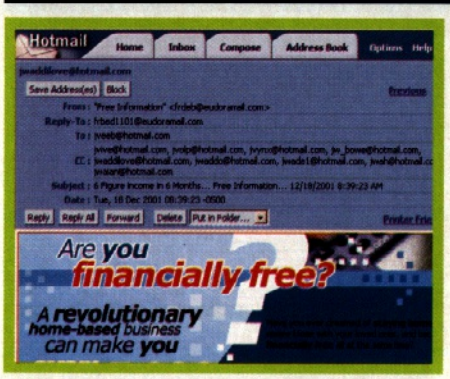
Symantec Virus Hoaxes
www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html
Comprehensive reference on hoaxes – good one-stop shop and tightly integrated with Symantec's antivirus database.

McAfee Virus Hoaxes
http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp
Lists all the most common hoaxes in circulation and ties in nicely with the rest of the McAfee service.

Hoaxbusters
http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org
US-based service providing useful background information on hoaxes, although it's not frequently updated.

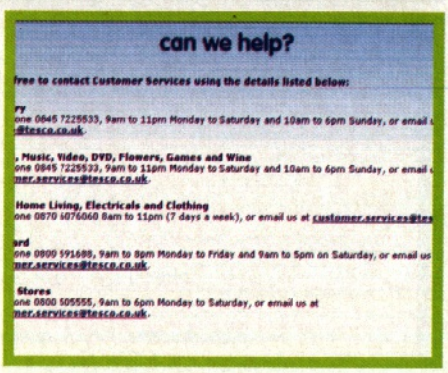
F-Secure Hoax Warnings
www.europe.datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm
Very comprehensive list of hoaxes, with the ability to show all hoaxes that have appeared, or just the ones in current circulation,

TIPS TO AVOID THE FRAUDSTERS



1 Ignore dodgy schemes
This email claims it is possible to make $5,000 a month from home. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true then it probably is. This may be a scam and the only people to get rich are the perpetrators. Delete junk mail and ignore it.

2 Shop safely online
When shopping online, make sure you know the company and that the transaction is secure. Remember that anyone can set up a fake site that looks convincing and you may be giving credit card details to a fraudster. Take care.



3 Check the details
No matter whether you are shopping, investing or simply providing information, you should check out the company. Is there an address you can write to? A telephone number you can call to talk to someone? Make sure the company is real.

POP-UPS AND AD BANNERS

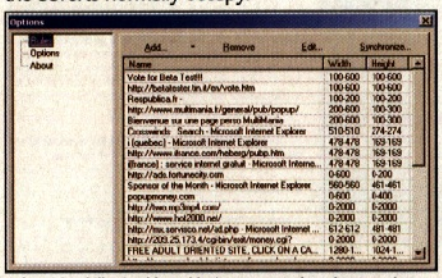
DELETE ADS

ONCE YOU'VE GOT your dial-up connection bursting at the seams with fresh data, it's time to use a little more digital trickery to separate the wheat from the chaff. This means installing an ad filter to save yourself from the hard sell. You can install a stripped-down edition of InterMute's AdSubtract (**www.adsubtract.com**) that's free for personal use.

These applications, like most Web filters, set up a 'proxy': a little program that monitors the exchange between your browser and the Net, tracking the various files that you request online. If any of them look like adverts (most come from well-known servers, such as **ads.doubleclick.com**) then the proxy will simply provide a suitably-sized blank image in its place, so as not to spoil the appearance of the page. You'll not only be spared the ads, but also cut the time it takes for sites to appear, since the proxy tells your browser not to bother fetching those bandwidth-sapping banners or any pesky pop-ups.

NEARLY ALL WEB sites feature advertising banners and we have grown accustomed to seeing them on the pages we visit. Many Web sites also display adverts in windows that pop up on top of the browser and there are pop-under advertising windows, too. Pop-under adverts hide underneath the browser window and you don't see them until you close it, whereupon you discover a screen filled with advertising. At first sight, this type of advertising just seems irritating, but they cause real problems. For a start, it takes time to close them and more importantly, they consume bandwidth. Accessing the Net via a modem isn't very fast at the best of times, but it is made worse by adverts stealing your bandwidth for their own purposes.

Fortunately, there are ways of preventing adverts from appearing on Web pages. The free Pop-up Killer (**http://software.xfx.net/utilities/popupkiller**) has been around for quite a long time and is a well established utility for automatically removing pop-up advertising windows as they appear. It works with Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator and Opera Web browsers. DeadAIM (**www.download.com**) is a freebie designed to remove the advertising from AOL Instant Messenger. It removes the area that the adverts normally occupy.

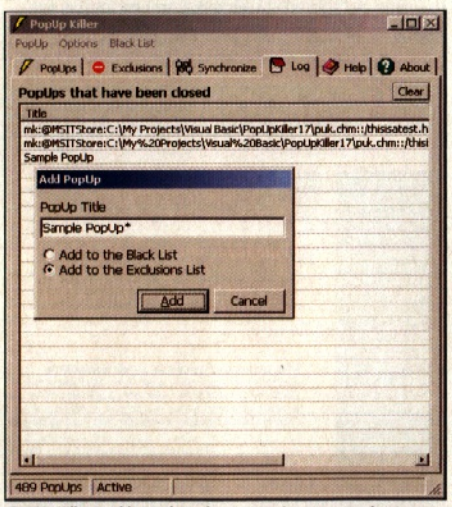


Advertising killer is able to block many popular adverts and pop-ups enabling you to surf faster

Guidescope is able to block a wide variety of advertising. It is a general ad blocker rather than a utility that simply closes pop-ups. When a Web page tries to download something, Guidescope queries a database of Internet advertisers and blocks access if there is a match. The idea is that less time is wasted downloading the ads. Download it for free from **www.guidescope.com**.

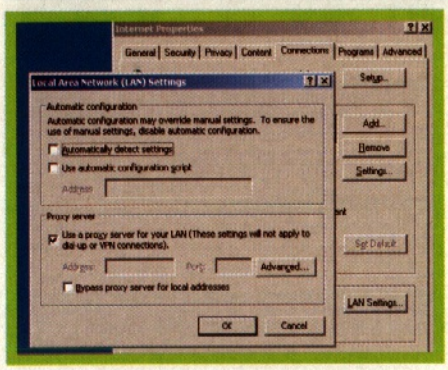
Internet Junkbuster (**http://internet.junkbuster.com**) is a more powerful relative of Guidescope, although this does mean that it is more complex to set up. It removes most advertising from Web pages and is free to use.

Other useful programs include AdFree (**http://ieng9.ucsd.edu/~m1foley/adfree.html**), Advertising Killer (**www.buypin.com/akiller.php**) and AdIEFiltr (**www.utils32.com/adiefiltr.htm**).



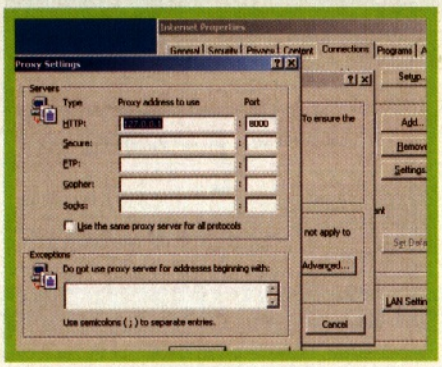
PopUp Killer is able to close those annoying pop-up adverts as fast as they appear

BLOCK ADS WITH GUIDESCOPE



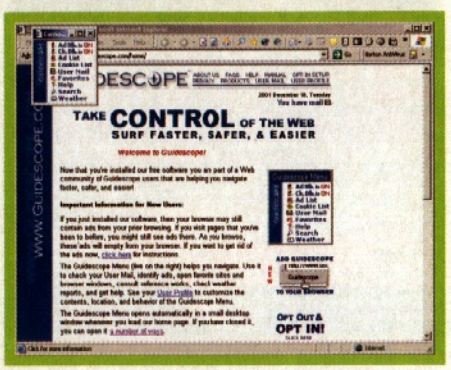
1 Guidescope ad blocker

Download Guidescope from **www.guidescope.com** and run it to install it. In IE, select 'Tools', 'Internet Options' and go to the 'Connections' tab. Click the 'Lan Settings' button, select the 'Proxy' server option and click 'Advanced'.



2 Set up the proxy

Set the proxy address for HTTP to 127.0.0.1 and the port to 8000. Click 'OK' to return to the Internet Options dialog then select your ISP in the list and click 'Settings'. Set up the proxy in the same way with the same address and port.



3 Start up Guidescope

Don't start Internet Explorer in the usual manner, instead double click the 'Guidescope' icon in the system tray. The home page will be displayed and a small Guidescope menu window will open. Click 'Ad Blk' to turn it on.

BROKEN DOWNLOADS

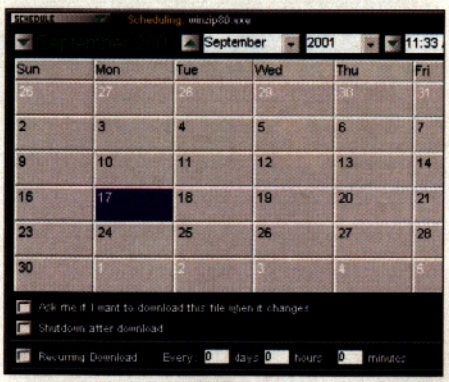
NOT EVERYONE HAS the luxury of a broadband Internet connection through which files download at lightning speed, taking just a few seconds or minutes. Most people still have to make do with a modem and that means a big file download can take an hour or more. Several things can go wrong when using a modem to download files from the Net, such as a dropped line due to a bad connection, the source can terminate the transfer, or your ISP may decide you have been online for too long and hang up the telephone.

Fortunately, there are ways you can combat interrupted downloads and it is worth remembering that Internet Explorer can sometimes resume a file transfer. If you are downloading a file and lose the connection, reconnect and select the download link again. With a bit of luck, Explorer will carry on from the point it was interrupted. IE's resume facility is a bit hit and miss so it is best to put your trust in a download manager rather than luck. Visit the software source, Download.com, and you will discover a whole section dedicated to download managers and many are free.

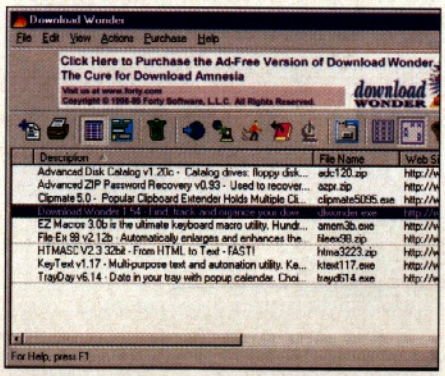
Download Accelerator (**www.speedbit.com**) is one of the most popular utilities and it has some very useful features. For instance, if the line is dropped you can reconnect and continue downloading, you can pause a download and continue tomorrow or next week, downloads can be noted for retrieval sometime in the future and so on. Plus, it speeds up transfers.

Another popular choice of free download manager is Go!Zilla (**www.gozilla.com**) and this utility offers pretty much the same features. you're looking at the chance to resume interrupted downloads, pause, schedule and so on. It can even unzip files after downloading them, send music to a play list, pictures to an image archive and more.

Other programs worthy of consideration are ES Download Resumer (**www.download.com**), Net Vampire (**www.netvampire.com**) and Download Wonder (**www.forty.com**).



Not only will Go!Zilla resume broken downloads, you can even schedule downloads to take place at any time or date



Let Download Wonder manager all your downloads and resume them if you are kicked off the Net

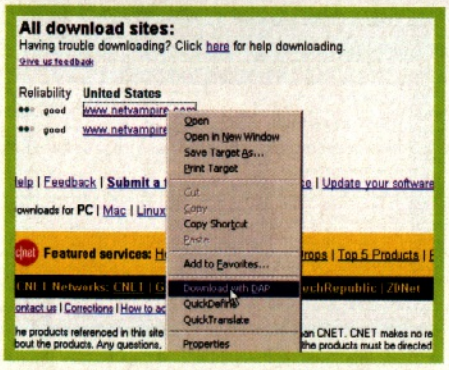
TIME KEEPING

ONE WAY TO try and avoid broken downloads is to go online when there's less traffic.

The first thing to remember when browsing is that you're up against other British Net users, especially to get at foreign sites. Congestion starts at home: or rather, when most people get home, so try not to snaffle files in the early evening, when dial-up users return from work and fire up their modems. Next, you're competing with the USA, so remember that in New York they're five hours back, and eight hours behind in San Francisco. This means that you'll probably have a hard time in the afternoon, when the east coasters are on their lunch hour, and the Californians are browsing over breakfast.

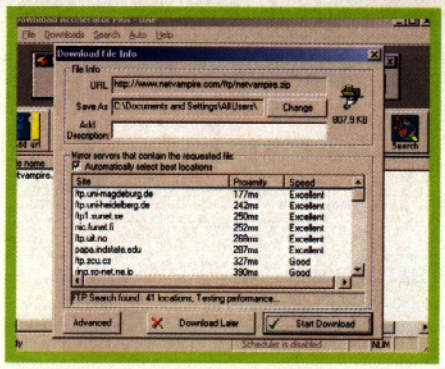
So, what does that leave you? Well, how about the very early morning, and the hours between breakfast and lunchtime? You'll usually find that Net traffic clears up surprisingly quickly once the Americans have gone to bed. With the aid of a download manager, you can take advantage of this lull, while Europe is still having its collective morning coffee, to grab what you can...

GETTING DOWN WITH DOWNLOAD ACCELERATOR



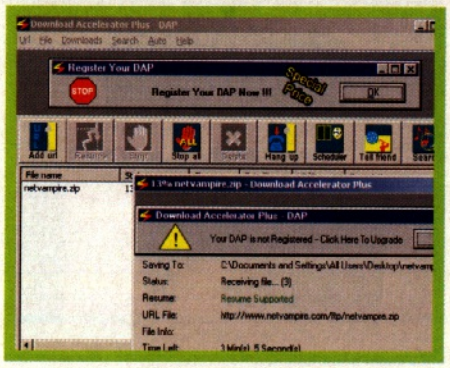
1 Select your download

Download Accelerator will automatically intercept downloads, or in manual mode you can right click a link on a Web page and choose Download with DAP on the context menu. Either way, Download Accelerator takes over the transfer.



2 Find the best site

Download Accelerator will search the Web for alternative sources of the file you want to download and test their speed. You don't need to do anything, just leave it to the program. Click either 'Download Later' or 'Start Download'.



3 Pause and resume

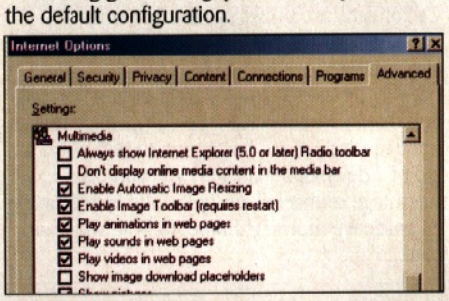
Notice the Pause button. You can click this to hang up the phone. When you log back on, run Download Accelerator, select the file in the list and click 'Resume' in the toolbar. Do the same if you lose the connection or other fault occurs.

SLOW NET ACCESS

TWEAK IE

THERE ARE PLENTY of ways to reconfigure your browser, to improve performance and cut out irritations, without having to install any additional programs. It's just not immediately obvious how to do it! The place to look is the 'Advanced' section of IE's 'Internet Options', containing a large collection of settings. The brief names can sometimes be a little obscure, so use the inline help facility to get a more detailed description of what each setting controls.

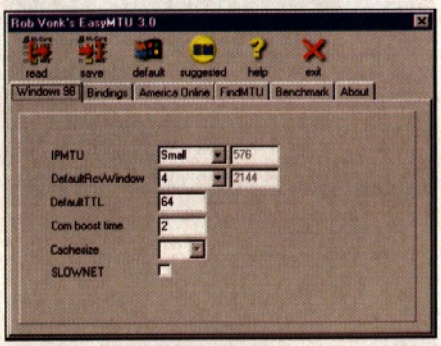
The quickest way to streamline your browsing experience is to go to the 'Multimedia' section, and turn off some of the more irritating bandwidth-sappers, such as sound files and animations. You can also get a feel of a site before images load by enabling 'placeholders'. Other useful tweaks can be found in the 'Browsing' section, such as the ability to browse FTP sites as Windows folders, the use of 'friendly' URLs, and the AutoComplete facility. Feel free to experiment with these settings: if something goes wrong, you can always restore the default configuration.



→ ASK PEOPLE TO name the most irritating and frustrating aspect of the Internet and the most common answer is likely to be its slow speed. Some Web pages take a minute or more to display, downloading files can take hours and there are times when the Net seems to crawl along at a snail's pace. Not only does this waste time, but if you pay by the minute for Net access then it is costing you money. Of course, sometimes there is nothing we can do about it and Web servers can become bogged down due to the sheer number of people trying to access them. The telephone line may not be as clean as it could be and your modem may not be able to connect to your ISP as fast as it theoretically could.

Double click the 'Net' icon in the system tray and it will display the speed at which you are connected when you are online. If this is always below 40k, you should contact your telephone provider and ask if they can do anything to improve the quality of the line. Connection speeds of 40 to 45k are normal and a few lucky people can connect at 46k+, but this is not very common.

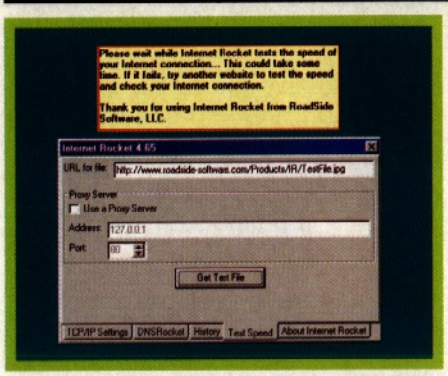
Slow Net access may also be caused by poor software configuration and there are utilities that can provide a small speed boost by optimising Windows settings. Internet Rocket (**www.roadside-software.com**) is a free connection tune-up utility that can speed up Net access by tweaking Windows' registry settings. Don't worry, it is a lot simpler than it sounds. EasyMTU is a popular connection tweaking utility that has been around for several years and can be downloaded for free from **http://members.tripod.com/~EasyMTU/easymtu**. Intelli-Dial-Up is another free configuration optimiser and is available from **www.skylam.com**.



EasyMTU is one of the oldest and most popular tweak utilities for speeding up Internet access

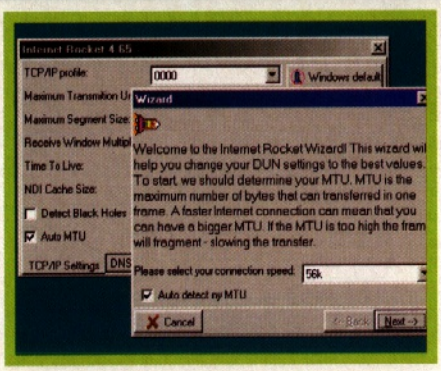
Intelli-Dial-Up is able to tweak Windows' settings to boost the speed at which you connect to the Net

MAKE YOUR NET ACCESS SOAR



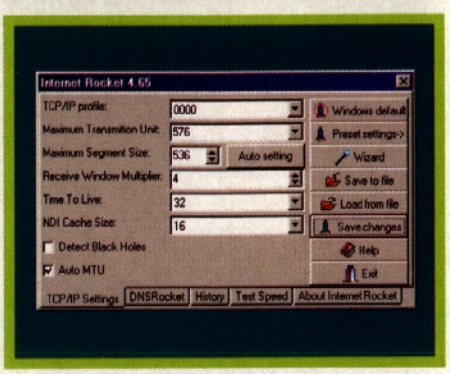
1 Connection speed tests

Download and install Internet Rocket and then run it. Go to the 'Test Speed' tab and click the 'Get Test File' button. The time taken to download this file will be measured and you can save it to the History. Try it a few times to get an average.



2 Use the Wizard

After performing the speed test, go to the 'TCP/IP Settings' tab and click the 'Wizard' button. You'll be asked several questions about how you access the Net, such as the speed of your modem, line quality, connection difficulties and so on.



3 Save the settings

When you return to the main screen, click the 'Save Changes' button then log off the Net and switch off. Switch your computer back on, connect to the Net, run Internet Rocket and repeat the speed test to see the difference in performance.

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Making movies for the Web

CLIVE PARKER EXPLAINS HOW TO GET YOUR FAVOURITE HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE READY FOR THE WEB. DISCOVER EXACTLY WHAT HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE YOU NEED

There's always a lot of hype about the 'next big thing' on the Web in the newspapers and on television. Most of these slightly misguided predictions claim that broadband access will provide video on demand and enhanced multimedia services to millions of homes in the UK.

In reality, broadband take up in the UK is very slow for two main reasons; it's expensive and BT is taking an age to upgrade its exchanges. But even when it is installed, the miserly 500K connection provided for home accounts is nowhere near fast enough to deliver full screen video; a minimum of a 2Mbit connection is needed for this. BT doesn't mention that ADSL can cope with 8Mbit connections; it just offers a restricted service to home users. If you live in a cable area the prospects (and connection speeds) are better, but anyone outside of a cable TV area has no chance.

But it is possible to watch video over the Web, and you can provide video content on your Web site for friends, family and others to view at leisure. There are plenty of inexpensive commercial and shareware applications you can use to create and edit your home movies on your PC, and a few freeware programs, too. You don't even need an expensive DV (Digital Video) camera, as an ordinary analogue video camera with either S-Video or composite video output will be fine. Add an inexpensive analogue video capture card into the mix and you're ready to get creative with video.

You can use an analogue or a DV video camera to film your home movies, both will have either S-Video or composite video outputs that you can connect to an inexpensive video capture card or USB device

Capture your movie

IF YOU'VE GOT a video camera, you have probably already got loads of tapes full of footage of various events such as holidays, birthdays, Christmas, day trips and parties of one kind of another. By the vary nature of home video, each tape will be made up of many individual disjointed shots that never quite manage to combine and make a flowing narrative. Even professional TV productions shoot footage out of sequence to be edited into the right order later. Now you can do the same on your PC. But first, you have to transfer the video to your hard drive.

Connect your video camera to your PC. The analogue video cable – either S-Video or composite video depending on your camera and capture card – connects between the video out socket on the camera and the video in socket on the video capture card. Now you should connect the audio out on the camera to the line in socket on your PC's sound card. Some PCs don't have a separate sound card but they should still have audio out, line in and microphone sockets. Line in sockets are 3.5mm jack sockets, the sound out on the camera can be a stereo jack socket or separate left and right phono sockets.

Most video editing packages such as VideoWave 5 can capture video directly from the capture card. Your card should come with capture software; this is Viewcast.com's VidCap, which is provided with Osprey capture cards. It's pretty basic but it does the business

Cameras can have a variety of connections enabling you to capture video to your PC. This camera has S-Video and composite video outputs for the view signal plus a pair of phono sockets for the sound output

Now you have to capture the video. The capture format depends on the final destination of the video. If you are going to be creating footage for the Web, then you should capture at 160x120 pixels. This is the standard size for RealVideo and Microsoft's ASF format over the Web. If you are going to view the video on your PC or create VideoCDs to play in a DVD player then you should capture at 320x240 pixels. Remember that if you double the pixel dimensions, the file size will increase by a factor of four.

What you need

IT NEED NOT cost a fortune to set up a home video editing system on your PC; the most expensive component will be the video camera, which you will probably have already. Here are some suggestions for hardware and software.

Hardware

- **Video camera:** any analogue or DV camera
- **Capture cards:** Pinnacle Studio PCTV PCI internal card about £47; Hauppauge Win TV Live Capture Cable Ext USB about £47; Hauppauge WinTV PCI internal card, various models from £60 to £100
- **Cables:** Phono and/or S-Video leads to connect between camera and capture cards, costing from £3 to £10

Software

- **Video capture:** MGI VideoWave 5 £69.99; capture software supplied with capture cards
- **Editing and effects:** MGI CineMatic £35.95, MGI VideoWave 5 £69.99; QuickTime 5 Professional $29.95; FlaskMPEG free; CinePlayer Editor $49.95 shareware
- **Playback:** RealOne Player; Windows Media Player; QuickTime 5
- **Streaming:** MGI VideoWave 5 £69.99; MediaPalettePlus 2.0 $49.95 shareware; CinePalette Plus 2.1 $49.95 shareware
- **File format conversion:** FlaskMPEG free

PC specification

You need at least a Pentium II running at 266MHz to capture and edit video. You will also need a lot of hard drive space. You need a minimum of 10Mb of space to be effective. Finally you need as much memory as possible, a minimum of 128Mb is highly recommended.

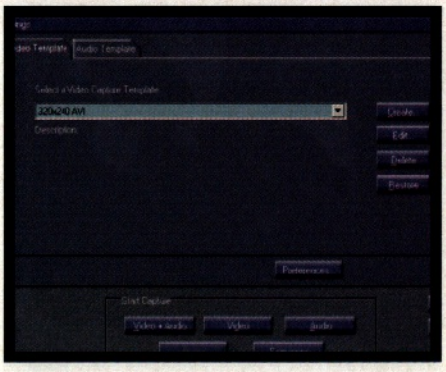
Capture using VideoWave

1 Start the capture

VideoWave 5 makes it easy to capture video from your camera because it automatically detects the video capture card. To start, click the 'Capture' icon in the left-hand toolbar. Now set up VideoWave's capture settings.

2 Capture settings

Click 'Settings' on the VideoWave desktop and open 'Capture Settings'. You must select the correct settings in the Source tab, Video Composite and Pal; you may have to try several until you find the one that looks best. Select 'Video Template'.



3 Set the video format

Click 'Create' and create a 160x120 template for the Web at 12 frames per second (fps) and a 320x240 template at 25 fps for PC playback. Select a template and click 'OK'. Click on the 'Video + Audio' button to start capturing video.

Edit your movie

Learn more about Adobe's Premiere 6 product from ***www.adobe.com***

→ EDITING YOUR VIDEO is where you get the chance to get creative with your raw footage. You may have, say, an hour of footage from last year's Christmas party that contains about 20 minutes of good footage. The only problem is that with a standard analogue video camera, there's really no way to edit it. With the capture card and software like VideoWave 5 you can selectively capture the scenes you like, trim them and combine them into a single mini-masterpiece for the Web. If you know which scenes you want to use, note their position on the video tape. Start the tape rolling and then capture the scene, stop the capture at the end of the scene and then stop the tape.

VideoWave 5 is simple to use even though its layout looks complicated. The main tools are accessed from the toolbar on the left, the timeline runs along the top, the library of clips is on the left, the monitor/editing window is on the right and various controls appear at the bottom right

An alternative is to capture the whole of the tape in chunks between five and ten minutes in length and then extract the scenes from the larger files as required. This can take up a lot of disk space if you have long videos to convert.

We're using VideoWave for this feature but there are others applications you can use such as Ulead VideoStudio 5 and Adobe Premiere 6 and many shareware and freeware offerings. Almost all video editors work in the same way. You view the raw footage in an editing window – called the cutting room in VideoWave – and scroll back and forth until you find the section you want. You then use markers to define the start and end points of the clip then you drag the clip to the timeline. In this way you can extract many small clips from a large chunk of video and arrange them in any order you like on the timeline. You can move clips about, set transitions and edit away like crazy until you have your final video for the Web.

If you have a little more money to spare or if you are keen to use your PC for professional or semi-professional video editing, you need a more capable program such as Adobe Premiere 6. It's not cheap at £504 but it's one of the best editing tools around

Edit clips in videowave

1 Set the markers

To extract a clip from a longer section of video, double-click on raw video file in the Library then click on the 'Cutting Room' icon. You can drag the pointer back and forth in the video and set mark in and mark out points.

2 Place it on the timeline

To add the clip you have just defined to the movie, click and hold on the clip in the Cutting Room window and drag it to the appropriate position on the timeline and release it. You can cut many clips from one raw video file.

3 Play your edited movie

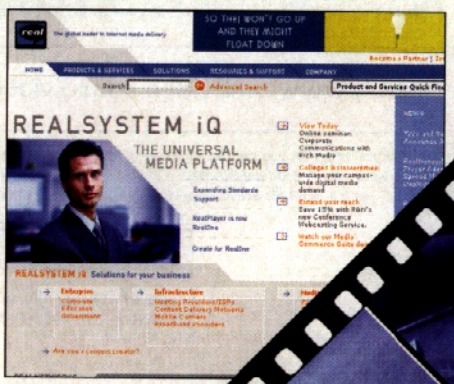
You can test your movie at any point by selecting all of the clips in the timeline and clicking the 'Play' button in the monitor window. Once you have assembled your movie, use 'Save 'command in the File menu to save the project layout.

Save and convert your movie

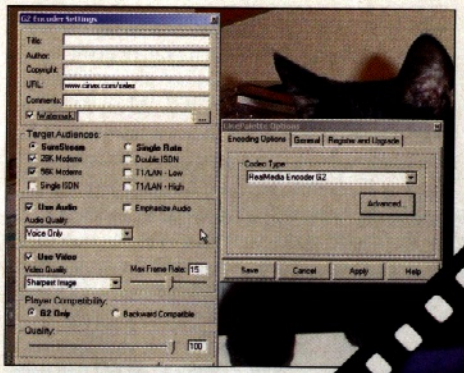
OKAY, NOW YOU'VE created and fully edited your movie to your satisfaction, but it still only exists as a series of clips saved as a project in VideoWave – you haven't actually created a standalone movie as yet. This is easy enough to do in whatever editing software you use, there will be an 'export movie' or 'produce movie' command somewhere in the file menu that you can click on. Before you actually create a streaming movie for the Web in RealMedia format, it's a good idea to save your completed movie as an AVI file for future reference. In fact, if your editing software cannot generate RealMedia files, you're going to have to save the movie as an AVI first so you can convert it with another program such as CinePalette 2. Save your AVI file with little compression so you can retain image quality. It's an idea to create your video files in AVI format at 320x240 pixel resolution and store them on CD-R or CD-RW discs to save hard drive space. You can create 160x120 RealMedia files from 320x240 pixel AVIs without any problems.

After saving your movie as an AVI, it's time to create your RealMedia version. You can convert the saved AVI files using a third party program if you like, but VideoWave 5 can create its own RealMedia files using built-in templates – see the walkthrough. Because your movie is for the Web you should select the following parameters regardless of what method you use for encoding; 15 frames per second at 160x120, sharpest image video, voice only or voice with background music (depending on your soundtrack) and multiple bit-rate for 28K and 56K modems. This is listed in the VideoWave 5 templates as RealVideo – Modem. Once the movie has been converted to RealVideo format, all you have to do now is publish it on the Web.

In case you are wondering what RealOne Player is, it's actually RealPlayer 9. The program has been given a complete makeover and now includes a Web browser. You'll need RealOne Player to test your final RealMedia files; you can download it from www.real.com



It's streaming heaven at www.realnetworks.com

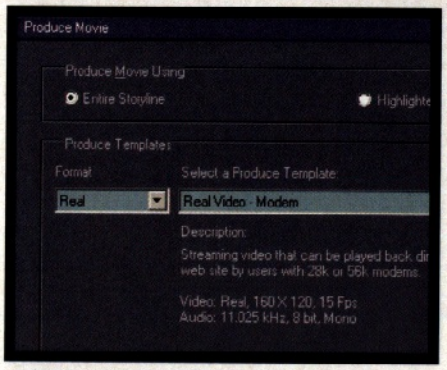


An excellent shareware program you can use for converting AVI movies into other formats is CinePalette (also available as MediaPalette – the two seem identical) which costs $50, that's about £35. You can use it to convert files between various formats with lots of configuration options for the best results

Produce your RealMedia file

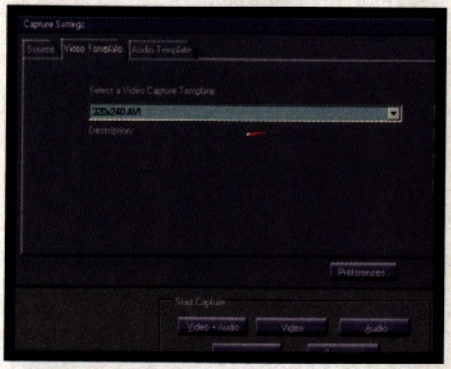
1 Create your movie

Now that you have assembled all of the clips in the right order for your movie, save it. Go to the 'File' menu of VideoWave and select the 'Produce' command. This enables you to save both AVI and RealMedia versions of your movie.



2 Choose your format

When the Produce Movie dialog box appears, select 'Entire Storyline'. Now select the Format from the pop-up menu on the left and select the exact settings in the Select a Produce Template pop-up. Click 'Next' to complete the process.



3 Produce the movie

On the next page, select the file name and directory for the movie. Click the 'Produce' button to create the movie file. It takes a few minutes to generate the final RealMedia format movie; you can watch the progress in the monitor window.

Stream your movie

IF YOU WANT to upload RealMedia movies to your Web site, there's an important point to consider – RealVideo files do not stream if they are stored on a standard Web server. When visitors to your site select the video, they will have to wait for the whole video to download before it starts playing. RealVideo files must be uploaded to a RealMedia streaming server in order to stream.

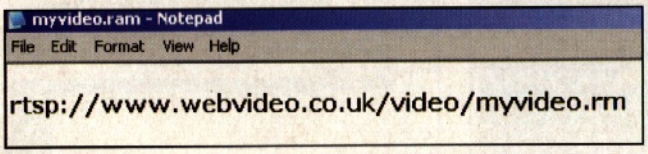
You should check with your Web site host to see if they have a RealMedia server; it will provide you with upload instructions and link information if it has a server.

Let's assume that you don't have a streaming server but you have a bog-standard Web server. The basics are simple, you have to upload the RealVideo file to your Web server placing it in a directory that is easy to remember. That's the easy bit. Now you have to create a text file that contains the link to the video file, the text file contains instructions that tell RealPlayer how to present the video. Your link or button on the Web page links to the text file, which then calls up the RealVideo file. See the RAM file image below.

Here's an example. Let's say your Web site URL is **www.webvideo.co.uk** and a RealVideo file called myvideo.rm is stored in the video folder on your site. You then have to create a text file using Notepad called myvideo.ram that contains the following URL:

rtsp://www.webvideo.co.uk/video/myvideo.rm

Note that the start of the link is rtsp and not http. Now save the text file to the same directory as the RealVideo file. When you make your link to the video from your Web page, link to the text file myvideo.rm, do not link to the RealVideo file itself. Upload the Web page, the text file and the video file and you've published your movie on the Web.



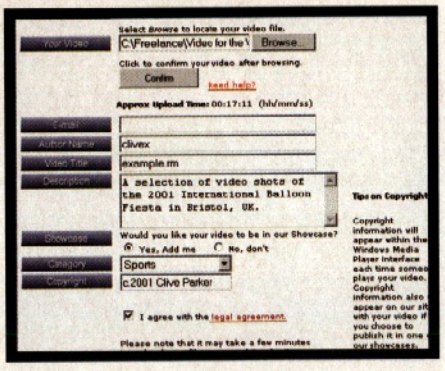
The best program you can use for creating and editing the text files used to call RealPlayer video files is good old Notepad, a basic part of Windows. Remember to save the file with a .RAM file extension so that RealOne Player can recognise it

You link to a .RAM file in the same way as you would link to any other Web page on your Web site, it's a standard <a href> link. Here's what it looks like

Stream with VideoWave

1 Streaming service

MGI provides a streaming service for VideoWave customers at **share.videowave.com**. When you register VideoWave you have an option to open a streaming account on the site. After registering, click on the 'Add' button.



2 Locate and upload

You'll now see a form that you use to browse for the video file on your hard drive. Once selected, click 'Confirm'. You can add a description and make the video available in the site showcase if you wish. Click the 'Upload Your Video' button.

3 View and share

Once the video is uploaded you can view it by selecting 'Play' on the My Video Library page. If you want others to view the video, click the email button and you can send an email with a link to the video so family and friends can enjoy it, too.

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10 hottest alternatives to Outlook

WITH A WHOLE LOAD OF CRACKING EMAIL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE, THERE'S NO NEED TO FEEL TIED DOWN TO OUTLOOK EXPRESS. **THOMAS WATSON** POINTS THE WAY TO EMAIL NIRVANA

Recent virus outbreaks have highlighted the problems inherent with Microsoft's default emailer, Outlook Express. Put simply, this is the only email client to use the visual basic coding that worms thrive on. The quick and painless route to a less virus-prone PC is to switch email programs.

With an program pre-installed on your system when you get it, the chances are that you haven't bothered searching for another client. There are, however, a huge variety of email programs on the go, giving you plenty of choice.

Even if viruses aren't a problem for you, it's well worth checking out the other email programs available. Whisper it, but some of the applications out there offer a more superior range of features and functions. Microsoft's effort might be by far the most popular, but it's a piece of freeware, like virtually every other email client out there. So, open your mind and get ready for a few home truths as you follow our top ten alternatives to Outlook Express.

ON THE CD

1. AllegroMail

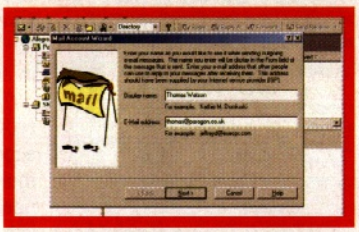
30-day trial

The opening screen does look rather similar to the one you see in Outlook Express

IF YOU'RE A fan of the Outlook Express interface, AllegroMail will be right up your street. Or, to put it another way, the AllegroMail interface bears several uncanny resemblances to its Microsoft counterpart. That's not to say that you should body swerve it at all costs, though, as there is still plenty to get your teeth into.

The main pull of this package is its vast quantities of powerful features. It's one of the few programs, outside of the ubiquitous Outlook Express of course, that lets you create multiple user profiles. The bonus of this is that different users of the same PC can configure their email to work precisely the way they want.

In fact, despite a relatively bland interface in comparison to that seen elsewhere, AllegroMail houses perhaps the most advanced range of functions. AutoArchiving means you don't have to spend your life filtering through ancient and uninteresting emails to get to the information you want. There's also a lovely option to let you forward emails from one account to the other, thereby making sure that you can always get at new mail when it arrives, even if you're not sitting in front of your PC at the time.



Other than this, the standard features apply. The trademarked AllegroType is actually an auto-complete address function, and there are plenty of address book options to keep you satisfied.

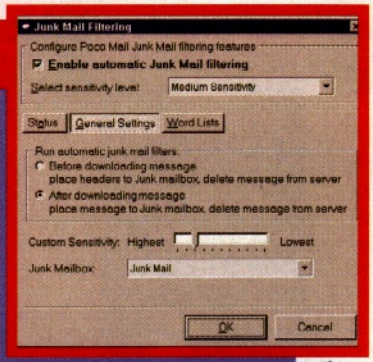
In short, this is jam-packed with goodies to keep you using it – the only problem is that you're going to have to shell out the best part of £30 to use it for more than a month.

Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉

2. PocoMail

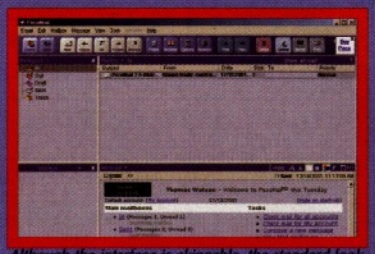
30-day trial



The junk mail filter rivals any that you'll see elsewhere

POCOMAIL PRIDES ITSELF on two things. Firstly, the makers seem to take great delight at the 'crazy' name of the client. Don't let this put you off, though, for the second main feature is irresistible. PocoMail is a program that does actually offer you something different.

For a start, the interface is fully skinnable, allowing you to customise your email program with the look that reflects your needs. Having said that, the default skin is significantly more attractive than most others on show, so you'll probably end up sticking with it.



Although the interface is skinnable, the standard look is rather fetching

Okay, so it's a not a truly revolutionary program. Many of the purported 'unique' features of the program can be found elsewhere, but we challenge you to find a better junk mail filter anywhere. This feature is very easy to use, with a slider marking just how strict the filter should be, but also packs a mighty punch in the slaying of tiresome spam.

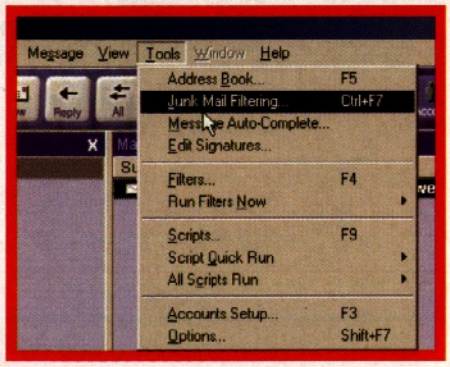
This is just one of many options, all available from one easy to use screen. We particularly like the fact that, on starting the program for the first time, you are automatically walked through the new account wizard. This way, you can dive in and use the program from the very start.

The inclusion of a multiple accounts option adds to the power of the program, and allows advanced users to enjoy the program. Allay this to the highly intuitive and attractive interface, and you're looking at a client that's liable to appeal to everyone. If only it was freeware.

Our Verdict

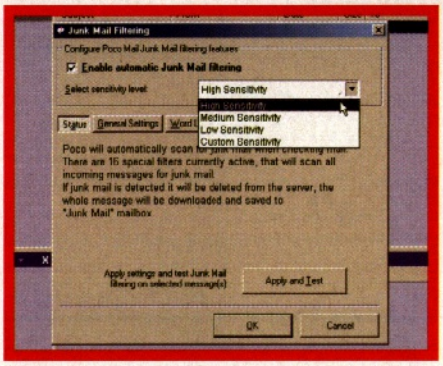
Verdict: ✉✉✉✉

Filter junk mail using Pocomail



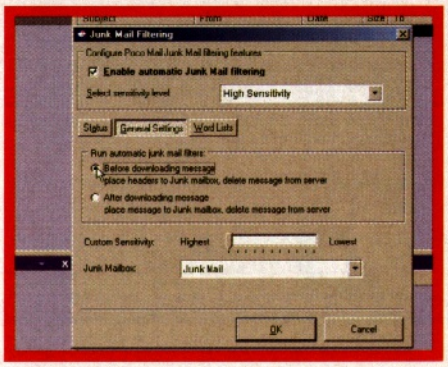
1 Junk mail options

As we've commented on before, PocoMail has one of the best junk mail filters on the go. To access this great feature, click on 'Tools' from the main menu, then choose 'Junk mail filter' from the drop down menu.



2 Junk settings

This brings up the junk mail options box, where you can adjust the settings of the filter. The first screen, the most basic, allows you to set the sensitivity of the filter. If you're constantly bombarded with junk mail, set this to 'high'.



3 Instant deletion

If you're confident of PocoMail's junk filtering abilities, click on the 'General settings' button, then tick the 'Before downloading message' box. This will delete offending mails from the server before you get to see them, and will only show you the mail heading.

3. The Bat

30-day trial

Its interface makes The Bat look like a pale imitation of Outlook Express

SOME THINGS IN life will mystify and cause confusion until the very end of time. Is there really a deity watching over us? Was Lee Harvey Oswald the lone assassin of JFK? Why the hell would you call an email program The Bat?

Well, we can't answer any of the above questions, but we can tell you that, despite the out of the ordinary name, The Bat weighs in as a pretty mediocre email program. The main problem, as we saw with AllegroMail, is the similarity with the standard Outlook Express interface. Compared to the Microsoft vehicle's king, The Bat looks like some kind of cheap Elvis impersonator.

One area where The Bat improves on the standard fayre is in the inclusion of a mail ticker. With this, you can minimise the program itself, but maintain a level of control with checking your mail. While other programs will flash up a 'new mail' message on your desktop, the ticker here is unique in that it provides you with constantly updating information on the sender and time sent.

You'll also find a built-in PGP option hidden in The Bat's cave, making for a smarter security option than you're likely to find in the average program. Another of the claims to fame here is the option to use the program in any one of 15 languages, which is great news if you're desperate for a Polish email client.

All in all, though, The Bat doesn't inspire confidence, with an interface that looks like it was designed some time ago. And yet again, the major disappointment comes when you learn that you have to pay for extended use.

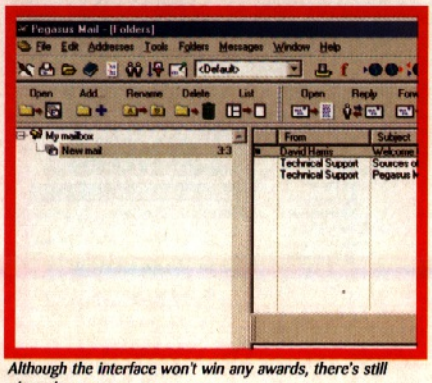
Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉

4. Pegasus Mail

Freeware

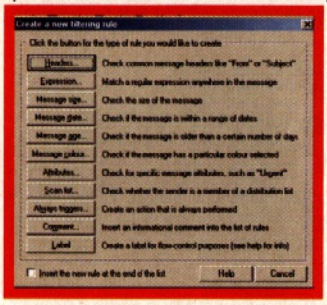
AT LAST, AN email client that takes Outlook Express on at its own freeware game. What's more, Pegasus Mail emerges looking less than shabby, and offers a decent enough feature set to entice punters away from the norm.



Although the interface won't win any awards, there's still plenty here

Many of the features and options you'd normally expect to have to wade around for are included in the main screen interface, making it far easier to change fonts and move emails around. Okay, so the icons are nowhere near the same league as PocoMail's, but they function well as indicators to the button's usage.

Pegasus Mail is one of the few clients to offer mail filtering, and a quick visit to the Web site informs you that Pegasus Mail was actually the blazer of the filter trail way back in 1991. With this in mind, it's hardly surprising that the filter options are the most comprehensive you'll find in any program.



The filters section makes Pegasus Mail worth a look in itself

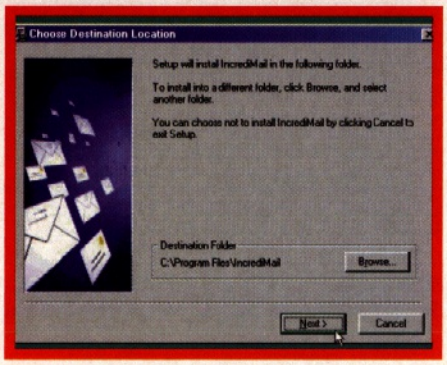
The real contenders to the email crown offer multi-user and multi-account options, and Pegasus Mail more than copes with both of these needs. The 'options' section is incredibly hefty, too, allowing you to change just about every aspect of the way the program works. There's even an option to refresh the 'new mail' folder every 10 seconds, which basically checks for new mail six times a minute. You should really receive your mail instantaneously this way.

Without doubt, Pegasus Mail's main advantage over its rivals is its price – or more precisely its lack of it. It also possesses a massive range of features to keep you going.

Our Verdict

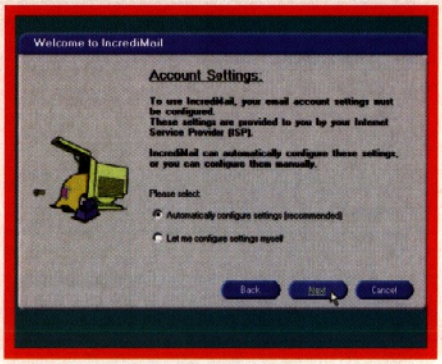
Verdict: ✉✉✉✉

Send a personalised message with Incredimail



1 Install Incredimail

Load up the installer from the cover CD. Follow the installation wizard and read the terms and conditions before selecting where to save the program. Click 'Finish' to run Incredimail.



2 Account set up

You first need to configure your email account settings. You can do this yourself, but it's easier to get the program to do it for you. Select 'Automatically Configure Settings' and click 'Next'.

3 Import settings

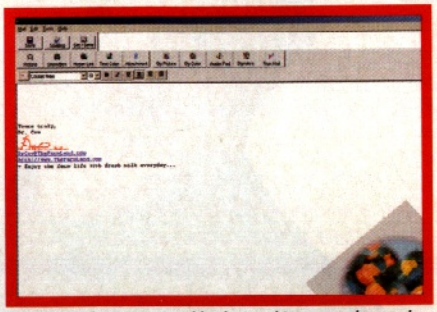
Incredimail will now import the settings from your existing mail client. To import your Inbox folder or Address Book, just tick the appropriate check box. Click 'Finish' to proceed.

5. Talk-n-mail

Freeware

WHILE MOST EMAIL clients merely try to tweak the features offered by Outlook Express, Talk-n-mail makes a good attempt at a completely different method of emailing. From the name, you won't be surprised that this client's unique selling point is its inclusion of voice messages.

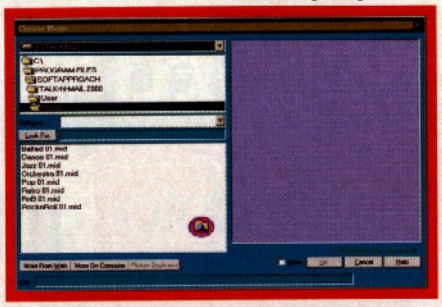
It's worth noting straight off that the 'talk' part of the program doesn't entail voice control of its features. What it does is make it incredibly easy to put voice messages and other sounds within your emails. In fact, all you need do is import the sound using the easy as pie interface, and it is presented to your recipient via an on/off switch within the email. We'd suggest attaching your own sounds, though, as the pre-supplied MIDI sounds will only make you extremely unpopular with your recipients.



The range of signatures and background images make a real difference to your emails

Talk-n-mail gives you a fair few alternatives to the standard email signatures, allowing you to include a scanned-in real life signature at the bottom of your messages. All of the features are remarkably easy to achieve and set up, so beginners will have no problems. There are also a few options to sink your teeth into.

The main problem with Talk-n-mail is that, when you put it up against Incredimail, as we're doing right here, it looks like a very poor relation. The two programs have similar aims, but the paucity of features and less intuitive interface mark this as the loser of the two.



Please don't send your mates these MIDI files, or they won't be your mates for much longer

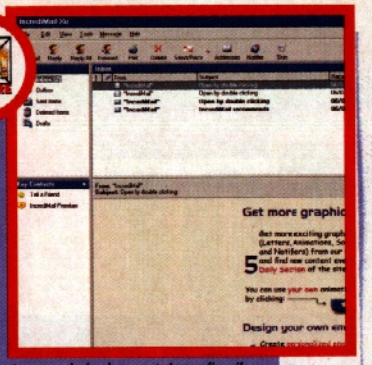
Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉

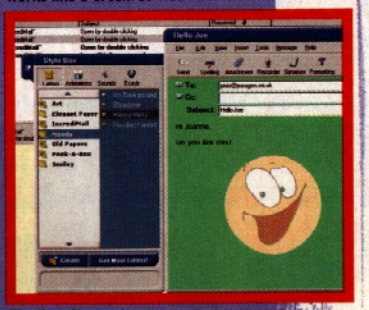
6. Incredimail

Freeware

THIS IS BY far the most multimedia-friendly client on show, offering a huge variety of images and sounds to beef up your emails like never before. Incredimail romps past the finishing line by virtue of its excellent use of animated GIFs, though. It's these mini-movies that really differentiate your emails from the standard boredom fest.



It not only looks great, Incredimail works like a dream as well



The StyleBox makes it easy to incorporate many different looks in your messages

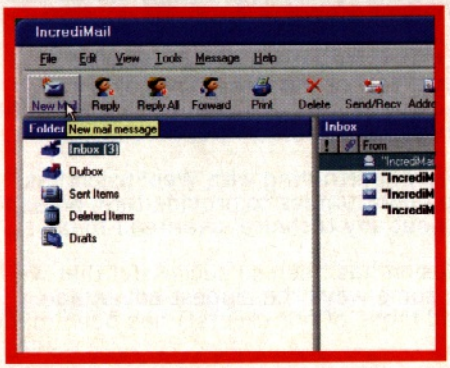
The whole concept of Incredimail offers an effective alternative to the usual fayre, and provides you with a genuinely different email experience. How? For a start, this is the only interface that won't look out of place on a Windows XP machine. Incredimail is also the only program that turns email notification into something watchable. You can choose from several animated talking characters who will pop up and announce any new messages to you. There are also various options to animate the sending and receiving process - you can watch a sent mail fly away into oblivion, for example.

It's the email content options that mark Incredimail as a winner, though. No program gives you anywhere near as much control over what you can send as an email, and the range of pre-supplied GIFs are, for a pleasant change, actually worth using. Sounds can be turned on by the recipient by way of a simple button link within the message itself, giving a truly multimedia sensation.

With all of this in tow, you shouldn't be surprised to learn that Incredimail also houses full emoticon support. :-) is all we can say to this fantastically entertaining program.

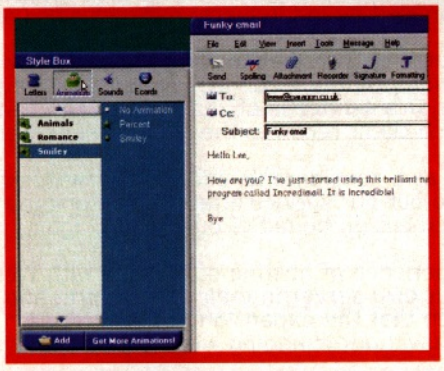
Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉✉✉



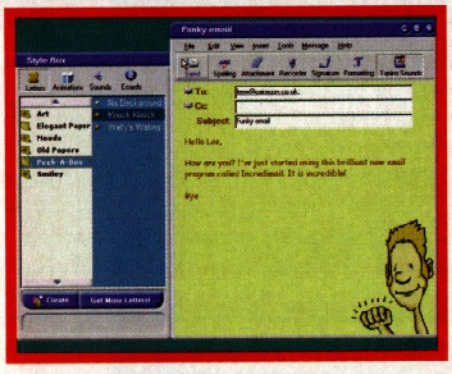
4 A new mail

You'll now be taken to the Incredimail interface where you can check the messages sent to you by the service. To start composing a new message, click on the 'New mail' icon.



5 Choose your styles

Here's where the fun starts. Type your message in the right-hand window and enter the recipient's address in the 'To' field. Now choose from anything in the Style box.



6 Send the message

A preview of the effects you have chosen will appear in the message window. Once you're happy with the way it looks, click on the 'Send' button to post the mail.

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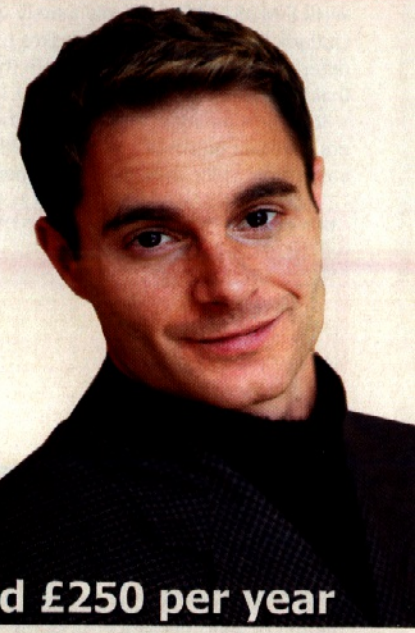

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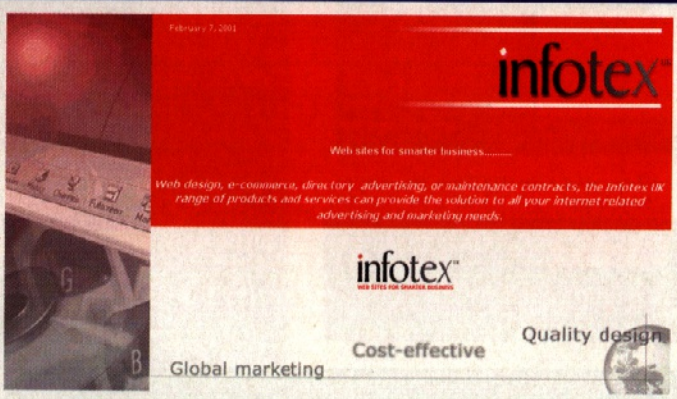

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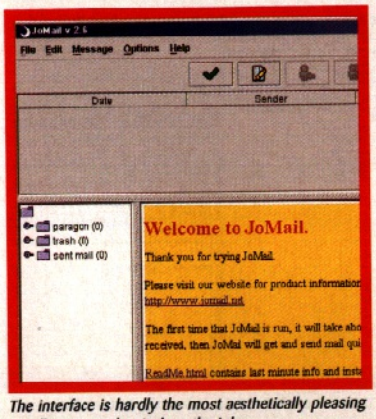
5. JoMail

30-day trial

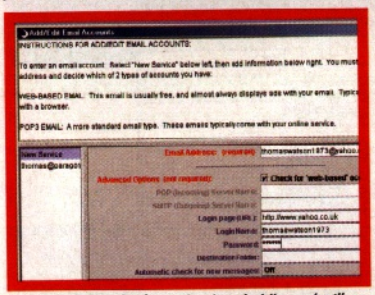
MANY PEOPLE USE Outlook Express to access their Hotmail account without the hassle of having to visit the incredibly slow Web site every time. It may just be a coincidence, but Microsoft's email client can deal only with Hotmail, also run by Microsoft. If you have any other Webmail account, Outlook Express simply can't help you.



The interface is hardly the most aesthetically pleasing you'll ever see, but it does the job

This is where JoMail manages to stand out from the crowd. Apart from having the same name as *Practical Internet's* ace sub editor, this is a decent enough email client, with the added bonus of having full Webmail support.

We will admit straight away that the JoMail interface leaves a lot to be desired. And you can't fail to notice a slight lack of features as well. This hardly matters, though, for the main objective of JoMail is to ease the expected hassle associated with Webmail.



Entering Webmail information is a doddle, and will make checking your Web-based mail easier than ever

As you enter the information for a new account, you need only tick the 'Web-based' box, then enter your account info, including the Web address of the Webmail home page.

Interestingly, and this is another feature we failed to see elsewhere, you can set the automatic check interval to a different figure for each mail account you enter.

Once you've configured your range of Webmail accounts, operating JoMail follows a standard procedure, with an Address Book included, as well as the expected mail folders for easier navigation. Again, the main problem here is the money involved in extended use. Unfortunately, you're going to have to shell out your hard-earned for that full version, as opposed to the 30-day trial you'll find on our disc.

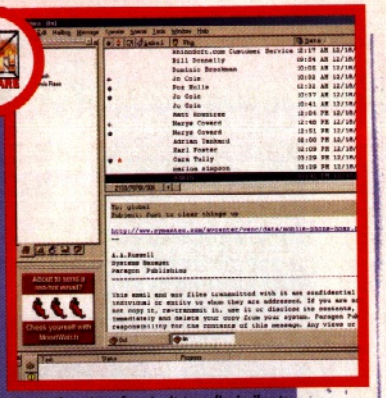
Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉

8. Eudora 5.1

Adware

THIS HAS LONG been the only genuine rival to Microsoft's seemingly unstoppable email juggernaut, and the latest version of Eudora packs even more of a meaty punch. Quite simply, Eudora is the only email client available with at least as many features as Outlook Express, as well as some extras that make emailing all the more better.



The Eudora interface isn't too dissimilar to Outlook Express

To be fair, the interface and control method of Eudora are both similar to what you'd see in Outlook Express. Accessing your messages is made simple with the help of the folder list on the left-hand side, although the taskbar makes it more straightforward to adjust your email signatures and stationery.

The range of options makes it easy to configure Eudora exactly how you want

Because Eudora is a smaller program than Outlook Express, it nips along at a fair pace, and manages to get rid of many of the cumbersome and clunky delays you find when using Microsoft's application. Advanced options and controls are far easier to access and adjust in Eudora, mainly because they can be found under one menu.

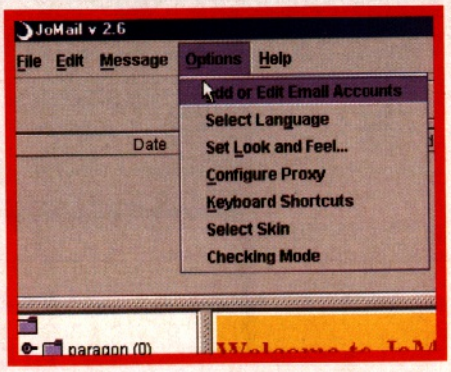
With full filter support, as well as some entertaining supplementaries, this is a true world-beater. The chilli ratings system is a joy, and lets you see how rude emails are on a scale of none to three before you read them. If this isn't enough for you, and you harbour some anorak tendencies, the 'statistics' section gives you a whole load of graphs on your email usage.

If you try one email program as a change from Outlook Express, use this one. We're sure that being in Eudora's company will change your mind about email.

Our Verdict

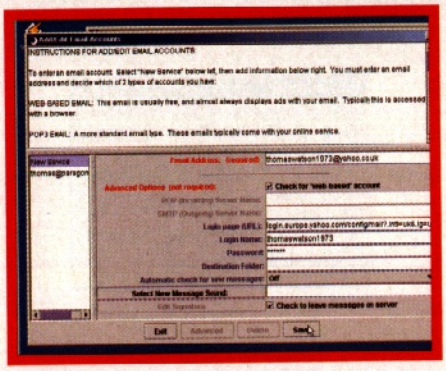
Verdict: ✉✉✉✉✉

Check your Web-based mail using JoMail



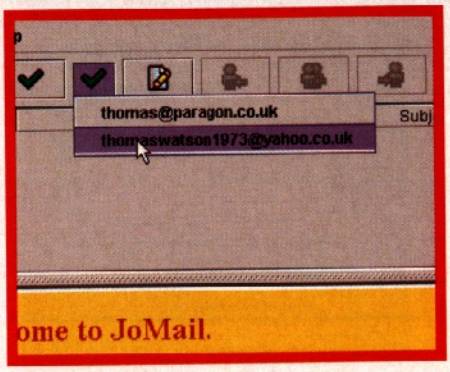
1 Add an account

First up, go to 'Options', then choose 'Add or Edit email accounts' from the drop down menu. This will enable you to enter any kind of email account you wish, including one that was formerly only available by visiting Web pages.



2 Enter your details

Enter the name of the account at the top, and tick the 'Web-based' box below this. Having done this, type in the URL of the service in question, making sure that it's the mail home page, then enter your user name and password.

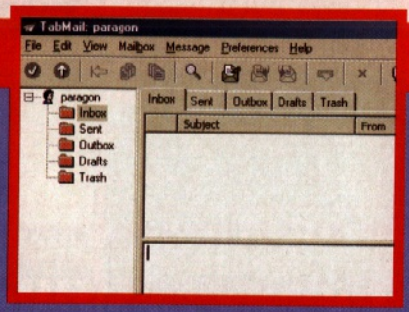


3 Check for mail

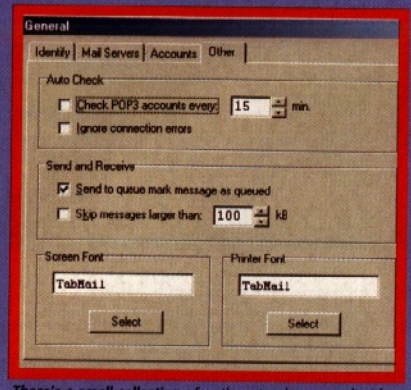
Now that you've sorted out JoMail to check your Web-based email account for new mail, it's a doddle to set the process off. Just click on the second tick from the left, and choose the Web-based account you've just entered from the list.

9. TabMail

Shareware



The interface is simple, but it's meant to be. Honest



There's a small collection of options to play around with

EVERY DOG HAS its day, and every email program has something deep within to distinguish it from all the other clients out there. TabMail's angle is its compact size – check out our cover CD and you'll find that the program zip file is just over 500Kb. The main objective here is to provide you with a fast program, where all of the junk has been taken out.

In effect, then, what you see is precisely what you get in TabMail. It looks like a small and compact email program, devoid of many advanced features you'd find elsewhere – lo and behold, if that's not exactly what it is.

Even though the emphasis is on simplicity, you can use multiple accounts in TabMail. The default mailboxes can be added to, but you're sadly denied any filtering or message rule action, so you'll have to place each message into the desired folder by hand.

One area where TabMail excels is in its use of message threads. With this, you can see the route of messages which stem from one email. This can include messages from all folders, and applies to both sent and received emails.

If you hanker after a streamlined but basic email life, then TabMail is the program for you. Sure, most of the features you might expect to find are missing, but no-one can beat TabMail in a speed race.

Our Verdict

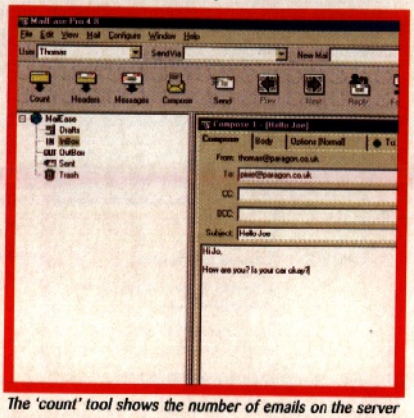
Verdict: ✉✉✉

10. MailEase Pro 4.8

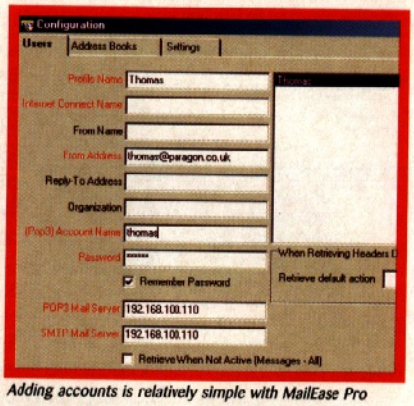
30-day trial

MAILEASE PRO IS another email client which falls flat on its face before the race has even begun – by charging money for prolonged use. Once we got over this irritation, though, we found this is actually a decent mailer, with a good line in message viewing options.

We'll cut straight to the chase, and concentrate on what MailEase Pro can offer you that vaguely qualifies as unique. Well, it actually possesses one of the most useful features of any program we looked at. The 'count' button in the main toolbar lets you see the total of emails currently on the server, as well as the headings of those in question. You know when you have to wait for an age on a message downloading, because of a huge attachment, then realise that it was all junk anyway? Well, this feature sorts this out once and for all. In effect, you can see what emails have been sent to you before going through the hassle of downloading them.



The 'count' tool shows the number of emails on the server



Adding accounts is relatively simple with MailEase Pro

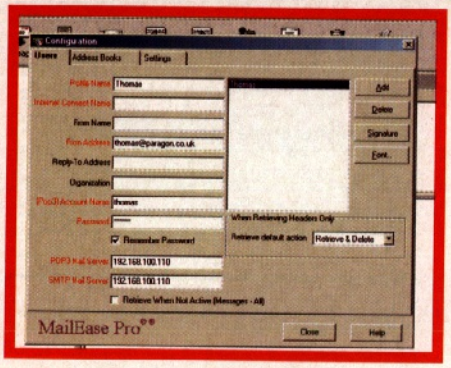
Apart from this, MailEase Pro offers the standard features, including the ability to send multiple emails to different people, whilst ensuring that only one recipient appears in the 'to' field. Despite claims of a 'highly customisable interface', you're more or less stuck with the drab, grey shell.

While it won't take the world by storm, MailEase Pro is worth using, if only for the mail headers feature.

Our Verdict

Verdict: ✉✉✉

Check your email servers with MailEase Pro

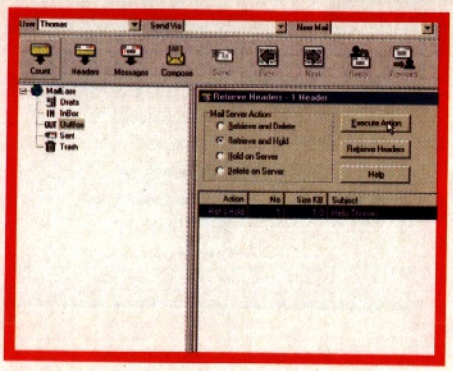


1 Enter account info

After installing MailEase Pro, enter your account information. You can access this part of the program by going to 'Configure', then choosing 'User Profiles'. Click on 'Close' when you've finished.

2 The mail count

Aside from standard message downloading, you have two options here. Clicking on the 'count' button in the main toolbar enables you to get a description of how many messages are currently on the server, and how much space they take up.



3 Getting a header

Alternatively, you can view all the mail headers sitting on the server, without downloading the messages themselves. Click 'Headers' in the main toolbar, and you'll be presented with a list of options for the mail header currently selected.

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TUTORIALS

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Amongst the myriad of email clients currently available, Eudora is the only one to challenge Outlook Express' dominance. Find out why more people are turning to this excellent package with our four page guide.

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You don't need to spend hundreds of pounds any more to get Flash quality on your site. With with the help of CoffeeCup's Firestarter, you can build up fantastic animations – and it's easier to use than Macromedia's package, to boot.

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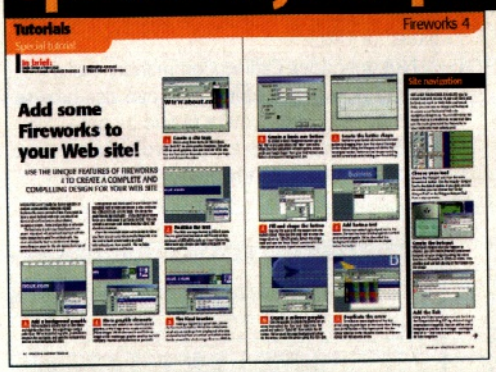


Generating navigation buttons and bars used to be a problem, until Fireworks came along, that is. Check out our eight page special on creating your own consistent site style within this great program.

Welcome...

THIS ISSUE'S TUTORIALS section gives you the full lowdown on creating professional graphics for your site. Our three specials show you how to edit pictures, as well as create your own site graphics using the best packages around.

Instant communication has never been easier than with the latest version of ICQ, and we've included a guide to getting the most from this immensely successful messenger. There are also sections devoted to broadband browsing, alternative emailing, and the new Netscape – as well as a guide to saving time and money by browsing offline.

Thomas Watson, Technical Editor

In brief:

Task: Browse the Web offline
Software I need: Offline Commander 1.4
Difficulty: Beginner/Intermediate
Time I need: 20-30 minutes

ON THE CD

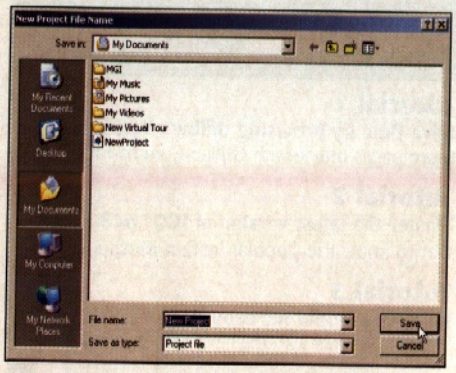
Save time and cash by browsing offline

DOWNLOAD AND ORGANISE WEB PAGES THEN BROWSE THROUGH THEM FOR FREE USING OFFLINE COMMANDER ON OUR CD

IF YOU'RE STILL paying for every minute you spend online, but are reluctant to sign up for an unmetered Internet package, it's obviously a good idea to try and minimise the amount of time you spend surfing. An effective way of doing this is by using an offline browser. These let you scan the Web without having to pay as you do it.

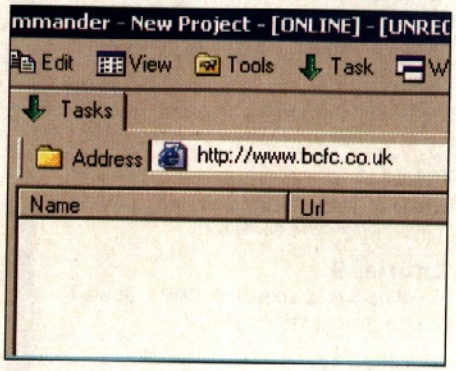
One of the finest of these money-saving programs is Offline Commander, which lets you download and organise Web pages, or even entire Web sites for browsing or searching offline. The program makes it easy to search these downloaded pages using built-in full-text indexing and you can view the directory structure of a Web site and its site map. The program also features a multi-threaded Web spider, reports, and powerful pattern-matching filters for URLs.

Not only does Offline Commander make it easy to view pages offline, you can also browse more quickly when you're online by pre-fetching specific links and recording every page you visit with the handy built-in browser.



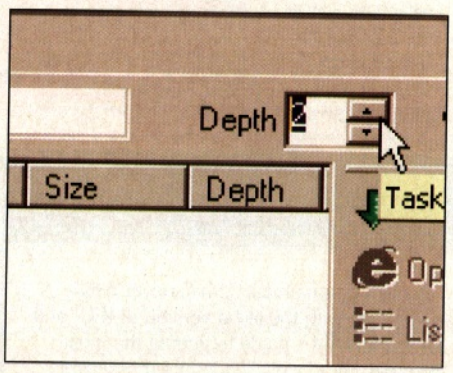
1 Start a new project

Install and run the program from this month's cover disc. You will now be asked to start a new project. Browse your hard drive and choose a suitable location before giving your project a name. Click 'OK' to proceed.



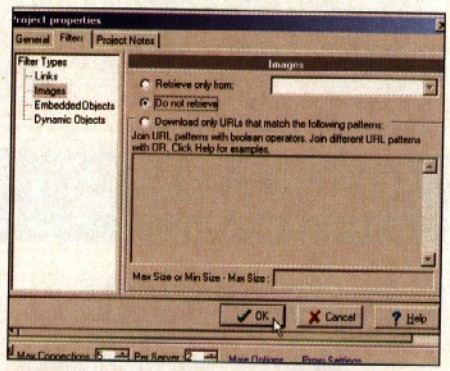
2 Enter URL

The quickest way to use the program is to type the URL of the site you want to visit in the Address Bar, much as you would do in Internet Explorer or Netscape. Ensure that you've typed the full address, including the 'http://' prefix.



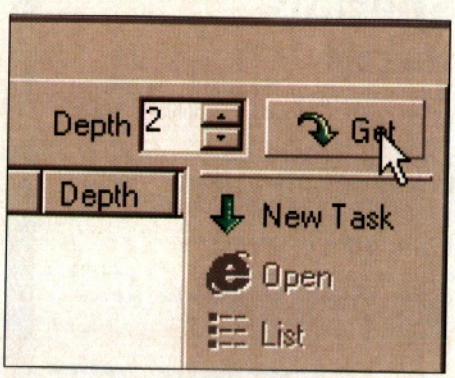
3 Set the depth

Be sure to check the 'depth' field to the right of the Address Bar. This lets you specify how many links the program will download. For example, entering a value of two will download the entire current page, as well as all the links on those pages.



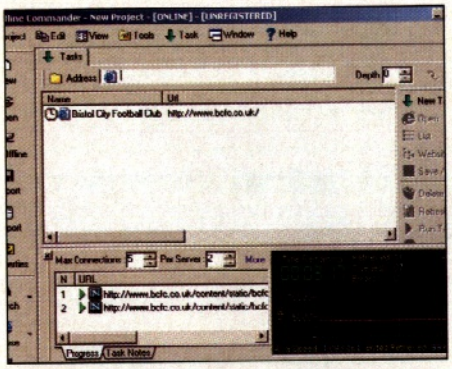
4 Filter your downloads

To streamline the downloading process, you can apply filters to the data obtained from Web pages. Click 'Properties' in the sidebar and set your criteria for downloading links, images and embedded objects. Click 'OK' to continue.



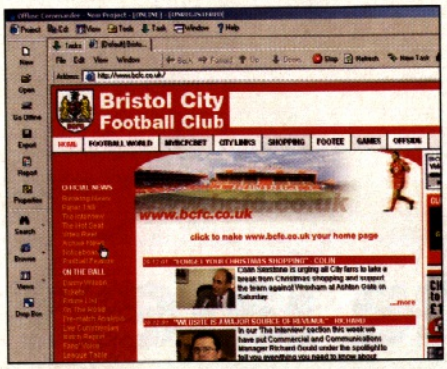
5 Start the download

Once you've finished defining the options relating to your downloads, all that's left to do is get the ball rolling by starting the download. To do this, just click on the 'Get' link found next to the depth field.



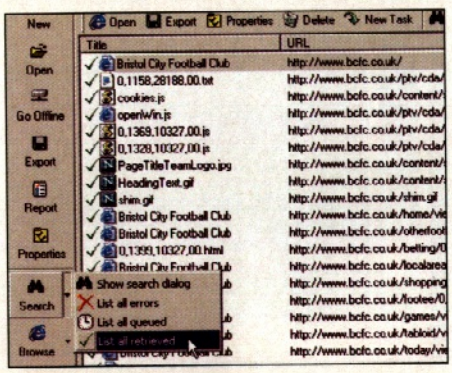
6 The download process

You can check the progress of the download in the chart at the bottom of the interface. This shows the current average download speed, as well as the remaining duration. You can also keep tabs on the number of pages downloaded.



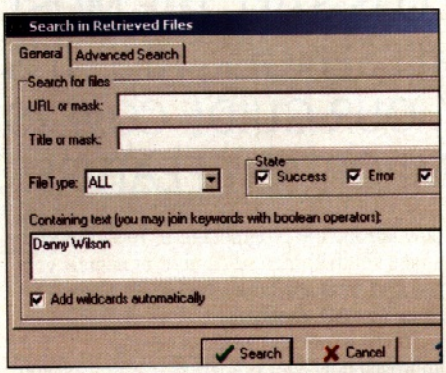
7 Open the site

Once the software has downloaded all of the pages, you will be free to browse them offline. Click the 'Open' icon in the sidebar and the first page will be displayed inside the browser. You can click as many links as you set.



8 List all retrieved

If you want to see a list of all the files that were downloaded during the process, choose 'List all retrieved' from the Search menu in the sidebar. Now you can check the title, URL and file size of all the pages you've collected.

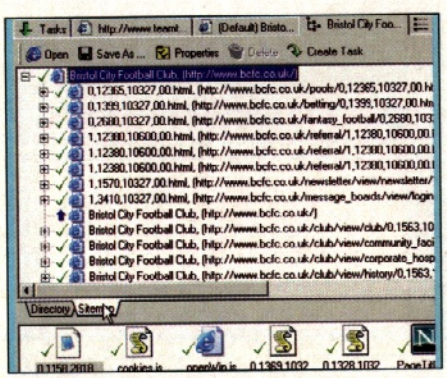


9 Search for keywords

Offline Commander has a Search function that allows you to quickly find certain files, words or phrases within the downloaded links. Choose 'Show Search Dialog' from the Search menu. Enter the criteria to search for and click 'Search'.

10 The Drop Box

Click the 'Drop Box' button on the Project Toolbar to launch the Drop Box. This small window accepts links dropped in from external browsers or the built-in browser. A task will be created in a currently selected folder for each URL you drop in.

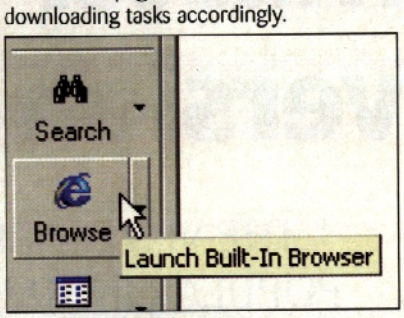


11 View site structure

Click the 'Structure' button on the Task Toolbar to launch a structured view of the task . You can view a task either as a directory or a sitemap. Sitemap displays the starting page of a task and all the pages linked to the page as a tree.

Built in browser

ONE CLEVER ADDITION to Offline Commander is its built-in browser that allows you to peruse the Web like you would with a conventional browser without creating tasks. This browser can also be used to record every page you visit in a project file. You can then view a structured list of these pages offline and schedule downloading tasks accordingly.



Launch the browser

To open the program's built-in browser, click on the 'Launch Browser' button in the Project Toolbar. This will load up the browsing interface allowing you to surf the Internet in the normal way.

Recording page visits

The software saves all pages you view in the browser in the project database. A new task is created in the list of tasks for each URL you type into the browser. When you click on the links, the linked pages are appended to the task you browse.

View files

You can view the list of files for each task by choosing a task and clicking the 'List' button in the Task Toolbar, or by opening the Task menu. Alternatively, you can use the Search option to retrieve specific files.

In brief:

Task: Get to know ICQ
Software I need: ICQ is on the CD
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 40 minutes

ON THE CD

Master the latest version of ICQ

THE VENERABLE ICQ IS STILL THE MOST POPULAR INSTANT MESSENGER, AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY. OUR GUIDE COVERS ITS MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES

THERE HAS BEEN a wealth of instant messaging programs appearing on the scene recently, but few can compete with the power and sheer quality of ICQ. The original and still one of the best, ICQ (or 'I seek you'), offers a whole range of features that have been specifically designed to provide you with the complete messaging experience.

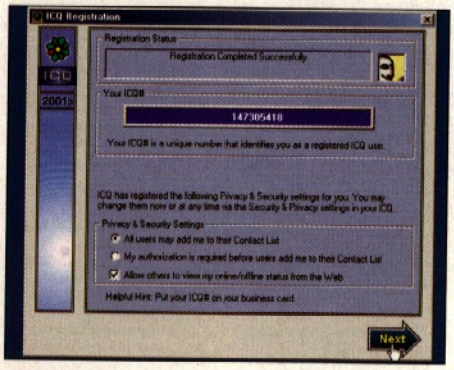
Part of the appeal of ICQ is the vast number of people currently signed up to the service. A quick visit to **www.download.com**, for example, tells you that some 180 million people have downloaded the program there. This gives you an idea of the potential number of punters you can chat to at any time – and it's all so easy using the ICQ interface.

The latest version includes several improvements over predecessors, allowing you to not only enjoy messaging like never before, but also have complete control over how the program functions on your PC.

If you're struggling by on an inferior instant messenger, turn your attention to ICQ and prepare to be impressed.

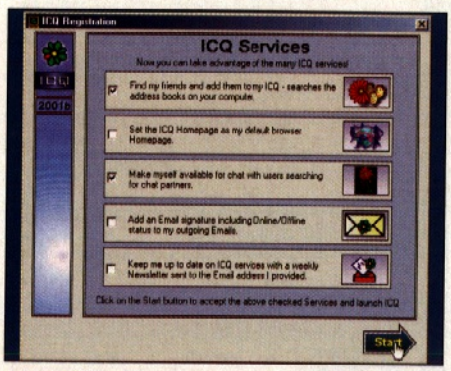
1 A new user

The first time you run ICQ after installing it, you'll be presented with this screen. Unless you have used ICQ before and have a unique user number, you'll have to click the 'New user' box to generate a new account.



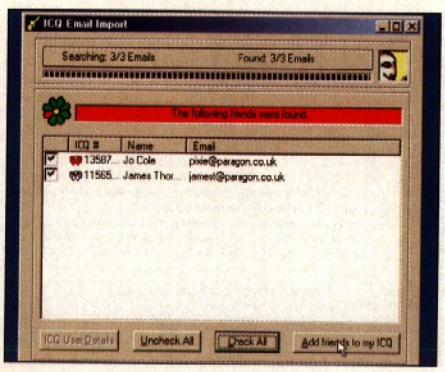
2 Enter your details

Now type in your details. Although you can enter as much information as you wish, the main requirements are your name, nickname and email address. You'll then be given your own ICQ number. Click on 'Next' to continue.



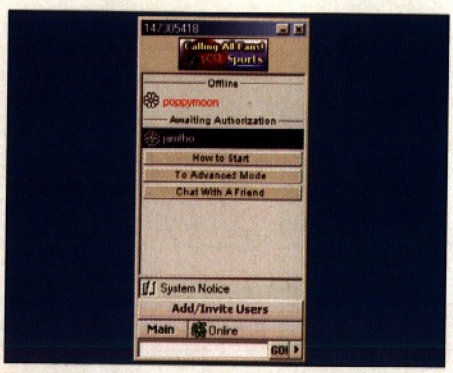
3 ICQ Services

The next screen goes through ICQ's additional services, although many will just lead to loads of junk messages. Because of this, we've ticked only the first and third boxes, to ensure that we can find our friends, and be found by them.



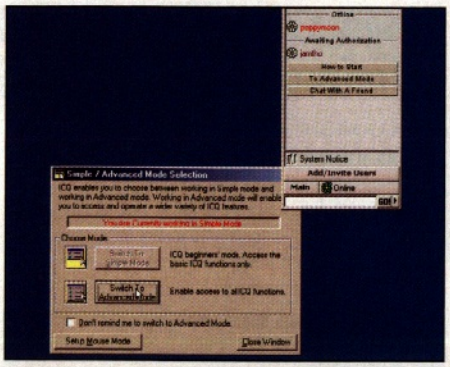
4 Add your friends

As long as you ticked the two boxes on the previous page, ICQ will search your email address books for contacts to add to the program. You'll then be presented with a list of the findings, and asked if you want to add them to ICQ.



5 The ICQ interface

This is the main page, where you can access all of the relevant chatting and messaging features. It might not look much at the moment, but there is a wealth of options hidden within this relatively small window.

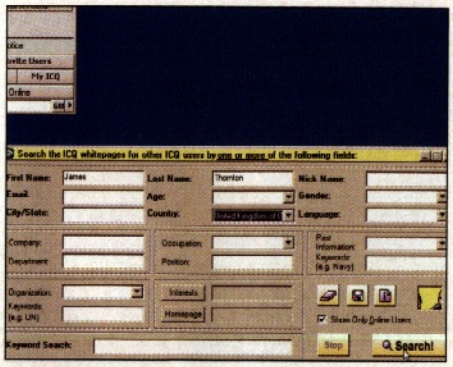


6 To advanced mode

Once all this is out of the way, we'd suggest heading straight to 'Advanced mode', which opens up more features of the program. To access this, click the 'Advanced mode' bar in the main interface, then on the relevant button on the next page.

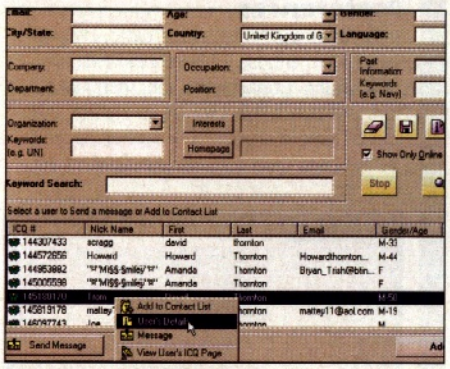
7 Search for a friend

An instant messenger isn't much cop if you don't have any friends to message. But you can work your way around this by searching for online chums. The quick route to this is to do a 'people search' by clicking the button in the main interface.



8 Search parameters

There are all manner of search fields and the more you fill in, the more detailed your search becomes. Most of the time, though, it's fine to just enter the name and country of the person in question. Press 'Search' button when you're finished.

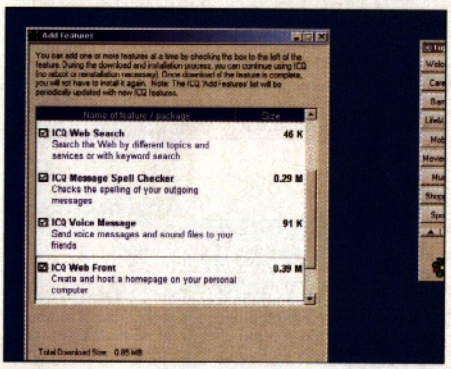


9 Search results

You'll then be shown your search results. Right-clicking on any name gives you a list of options, allowing you to view the full details of the person or add them to your contacts list. This is the easiest way of finding your friends online.

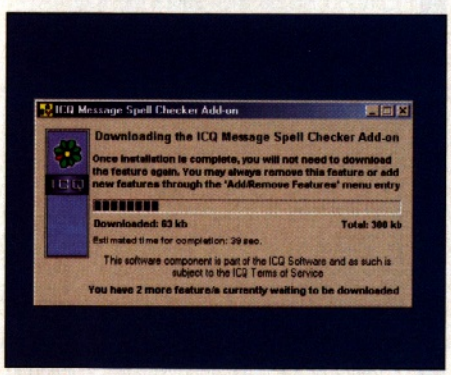
10 Add new features

Don't like the standard features of ICQ? You can add more if you like. This section of the program is accessed by clicking on 'My ICQ' and choosing 'Add/Remove features' then 'Install new features'.



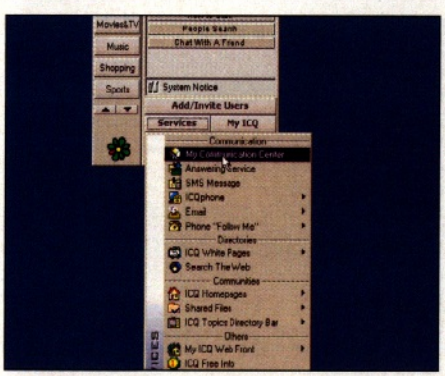
11 The features list

This takes you to a list of the currently available additional features. While it's obviously useful to tick on all boxes, remember that each of the features has to be downloaded first. Bear this in mind to save yourself some time.



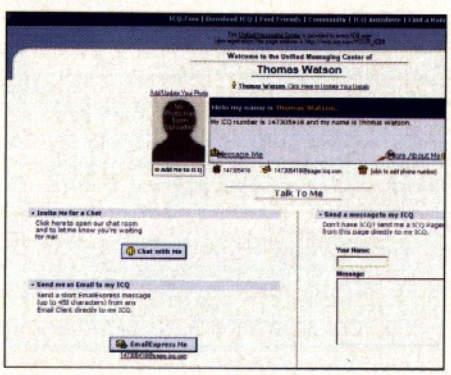
12 Install new features

The additional features will be downloaded to your version of ICQ. The status bar at the bottom keeps you informed as to the progress of each download. When it's finished, you can go back to the main interface.



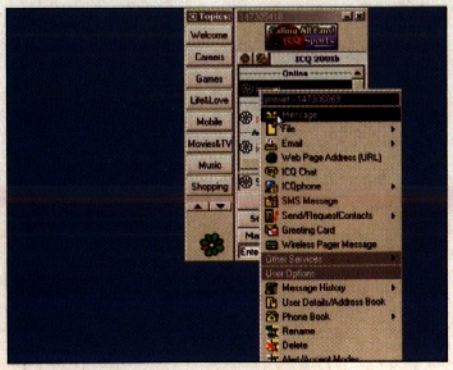
13 Communications Center

Every user who signs up to ICQ is automatically provided with their own 'unified messaging' centre, which is basically a page on the Web filled with all the information and links needed to contact you with ICQ.



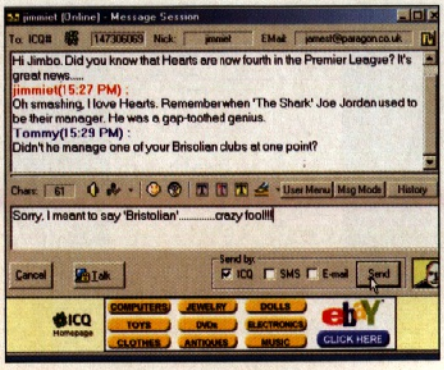
14 The info centre

On this page, visitors can perform the whole variety of ICQ messaging tricks. The difference here is that every option is based around contacting you, making it incredibly easy for someone to get hold of you.



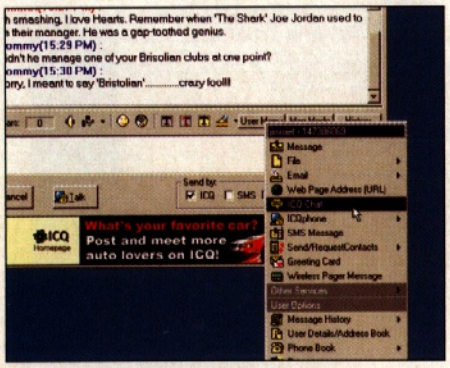
15 Your first message

To send a message to anyone in your contacts list, double click their name. You can also left-click once to bring up the 'user menu' and its options. If you do this, select the first option to send a simple message.



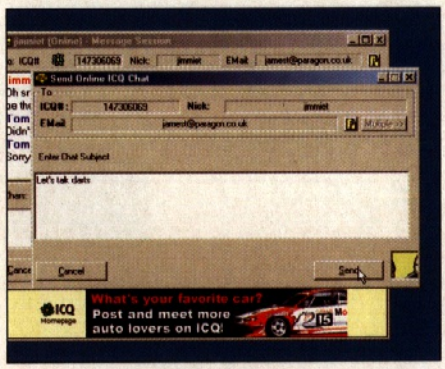
16 Message options

The message window houses a number of options. If you ticked the option before, you'll find a handy spell checker, as well as more emoticons and 'emotions' than you should really need. Click on 'Send' to send the message.



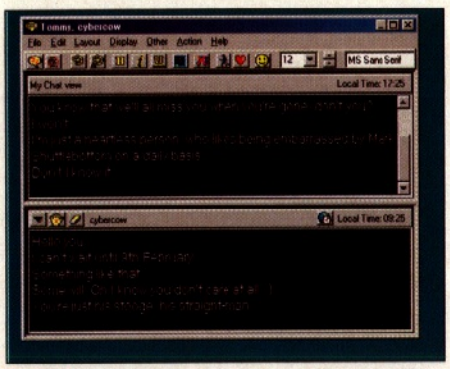
17 ICQ Chat

Instant messaging might be quick, but the ICQ Chat facility is faster – you can chat in real-time with any other ICQ user. To access this, click on the 'user menu' button in the message window, and choose 'ICQ Chat' from the menu.



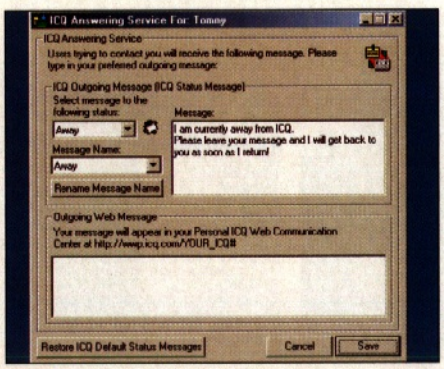
18 Chat subject

In order to initiate the chat, you'll have to give your invitation a title. If your mate knows you're asking for the chat, this doesn't really matter, but you still have to enter a name for the chat session. Once you've done this, click 'Send'.



19 The chat

The main difference between this kind of chat and standard instant messaging is that each of you can see each other type in real-time – so you can see spelling mistakes being corrected. It's high pressure messaging, but can be a lot of fun.

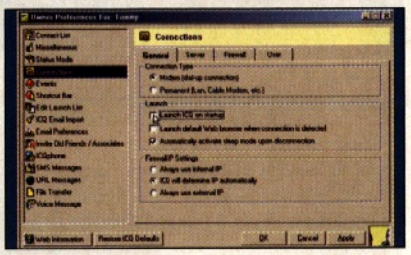


20 Answering message

You can't always be there to pick up your messages as they arrive, so ICQ has an answering service. To change this, click 'Services', 'Answering service'. You can then alter the message displayed to anyone trying to contact you when you're offline.

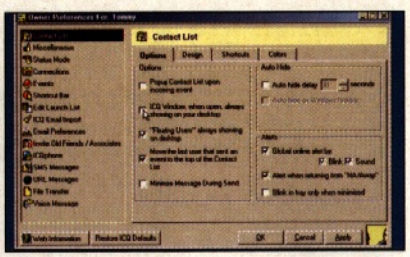
Personal Preferences

ICQ MIGHT HAVE a lot of useful features, but there are also a fair few functions of the program that you'll quickly want to live without. So, to get the best out of ICQ, it's worth taking a look at the Preferences folder, and making sure that only the essential elements are retained.



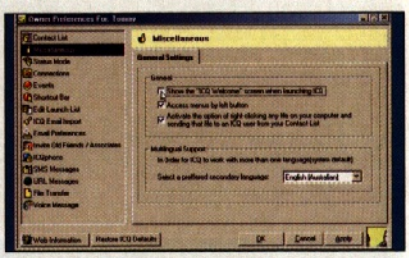
Preferences

To bring up the Preferences folder, click on 'Main' then choose 'Preferences'. First up, click on the 'Connections' tab, then make sure you untick the 'Launch on startup' box. This will improve your PC's start-up speed to a fashion, and means you load ICQ when you want to.



Always on top

It can also be quite irritating to have ICQ always on top, blocking out all other open windows. To cancel this option, click on the 'Contact List' tab, then untick the 'ICQ Window' box. This will make running ICQ altogether more pleasurable.



Not welcome here

Another of the slight annoyances you'll find in ICQ is the bloody welcome message, which insists on appearing every time you start the program. Get rid of this by clicking on the 'Miscellaneous' tab, then unticking the 'Show welcome message' box.

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Advanced Web Stats	---	✓	✓
POP3 Email Accounts	20	100	350
Web Mail Access	✓	✓	✓
Email Forwarding	✓	✓	✓
Autoresponders	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
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MS Index Server	---	£32.50	✓
ASP Support	✓	✓	✓
PHP4 Support	✓	✓	✓
CGI-Bin	✓	✓	✓
Perl 5.0.1	✓	✓	✓
FTP Account	✓	✓	✓
Custom 404 Pages	---	✓	✓
Your Own SSL Cert.	---	Option	Option
WAP support	✓	✓	✓
System DSNs	✓	✓	✓
MDAC / OLEDB 4.0	✓	✓	✓
Access 97 / 2000	✓	✓	✓
MS SQL 7 Server	---	£125	✓
FrontPage 2000	✓	✓	✓
MS Visual InterDev 6.0	---	✓	✓
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Unlimited Sub Domains	✓	✓	✓
Password Protection	✓	✓	✓

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In brief:

Task: Use a multi-pane browser to surf the Web
Software I need: Viewtopia
Difficulty: Beginner/Intermediate
Time I need: 20 minutes

ON THE CD

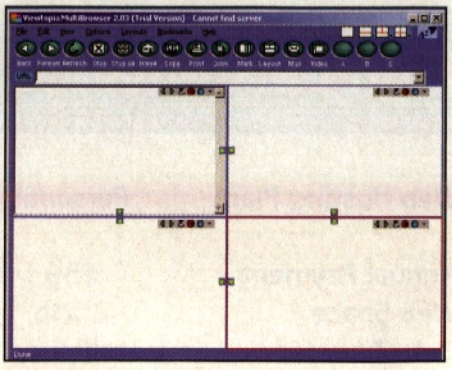
Experience quadrophonic Web browsing

GOT A FAST NET CONNECTION? THEN ACCESS SIMULTANEOUS WEB SITES WITH THIS NOVEL SPLIT-SCREEN BROWSER

WHILE TRADITIONAL WEB browsers will let you sift through the Internet, if you're looking to make the most of every aspect of the Net you might want to try a multi-pane browser.

These programs are great if you're lucky enough to have a broadband connection as they allow you to view Web pages, streaming TV or video, email or a desktop productivity utility simultaneously without having to flick between each one. Viewtopia lets you act like a villain in James Bond, sitting in front of several TV screens at once, allowing you to keep one eye on the Web while you're watching the latest current affairs developments, reading your incoming mail or working on a Word document.

The Viewtopia browser lets you split your PC screen into two, three or even four subwindows and allows you to easily alter the layout of the windows for maximum viewing pleasure. The program's interface is easy to get used to and features a drag-and-drop Application Capture utility that lets you assign your email, media player, and up to three applications to buttons on the browser.



1 Launch the browser

Install the program from this month's cover CD and run Viewtopia. When you first launch the browser it will open with four equally sized blank windows. Each of these windows can be loaded with either a Web page or an application.

2 Enter a URL

Click inside the top left-hand window. You'll notice that the window is now highlighted with a red box. You can now type a URL in the Viewtopia address bar to a load a Web page in this window as you would do with any other browser.

3 Add an email application

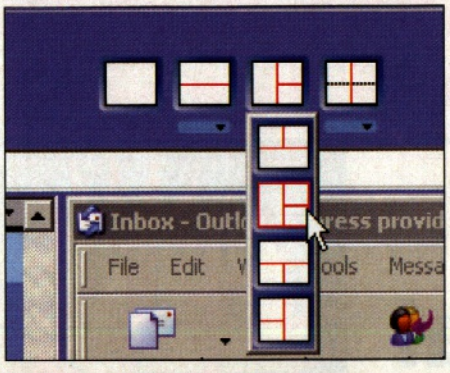
The program allows you to view your email client in one of the windows. Click on the icon of your email program from the Programs menu on the Windows Start menu bar and drag this onto the email button in the Viewtopia toolbar.

4 Add video application

You can also add a video media player to one of the windows. Simply drag the Media Player icon from the Windows Start menu onto the Video button in the Viewtopia toolbar to open the player in the next available window.

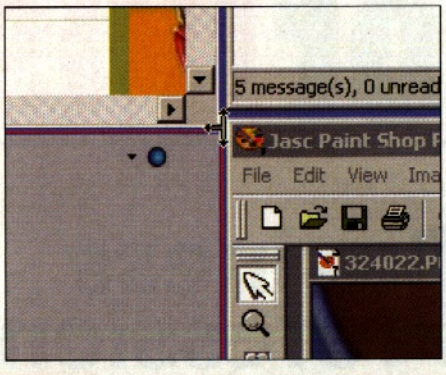
5 Add another application

In the same way that you added an email program and a media player, you can assign another application to a particular window by dragging its icon from the Windows Start menu to one of the vacant A, B or C buttons in the toolbar.



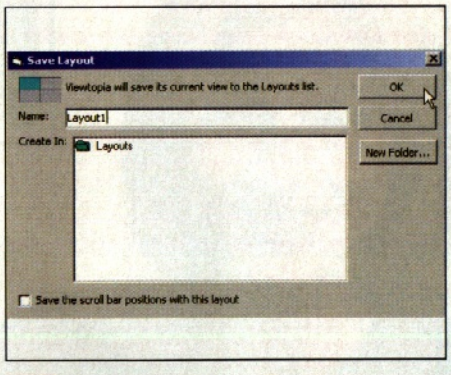
6 A different view

In order to maximise your viewing pleasure, choose one of Viewtopia's preset window layouts. By clicking the layout icons in the toolbar, you can choose your window arrangement based on how many boxes you want running at the same time.



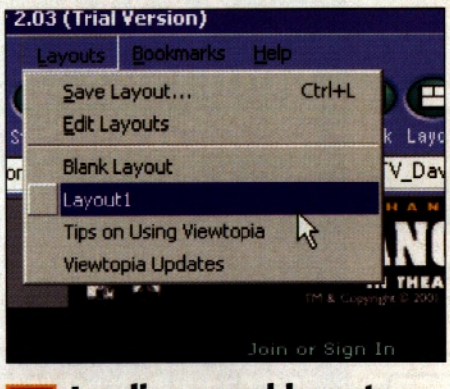
7 Re-sizing windows

If you don't wish to use the preset window arrangements, you can re-size a window by clicking and dragging the red box around it. You can re-size all the windows at once by clicking where the boxes meet and dragging all of them simultaneously.



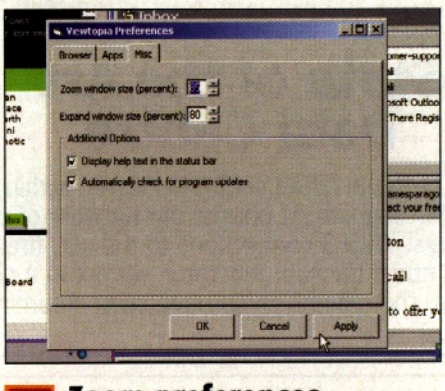
8 Saving new layouts

Once you have positioned your windows in a layout, you can save the format to the Viewtopia Layouts folder for use again. Click on 'Save Layout' from the Layouts menu and enter a name for your new layout. Click 'Save' to add the new layout.



9 Loading saved layouts

When you wish to open up a saved layout, just click on the 'Layouts' menu and select the name of your saved layout from the drop-down list. This will then load the window formation that you defined in the previous step.

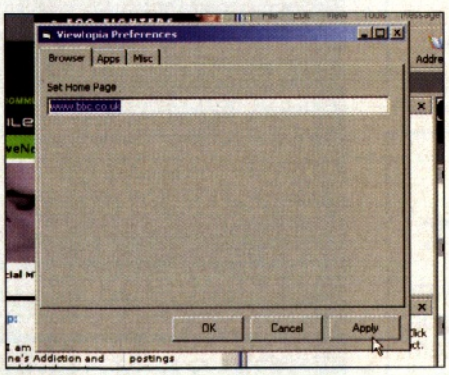


10 Zoom preferences

It's a good idea to set the size of the zoom. Choose 'Preferences' from the Options menu and click the 'Misc' tab. Now select the zoom percentage and the expand window percentage and click 'Apply'.

11 Take a closer look

To get a better view of the window you have currently selected, click the 'Zoom' button in the Viewtopia toolbar. This will then expand that particular window by the proportion you selected in the previous step.



12 Take me home

You can specify a home page for any Viewtopia window so this page loads up every time you run the browser. Choose 'Preferences' from the Options menu and enter your desired URL in the space provided. Now click 'Apply'.

13 Individual windows

As well as being able to navigate the Web pages from the main tool, you can also use the mini-toolbar inside each window to move forwards and go back through Web pages as well as refreshing pages or stopping them from loading.

14 Window swapping

A clever feature of Viewtopia is that it lets you move Web pages and applications around the various windows. To swap windows around, click the small circle in the window toolbar and drag it onto the window you wish to move the page to.

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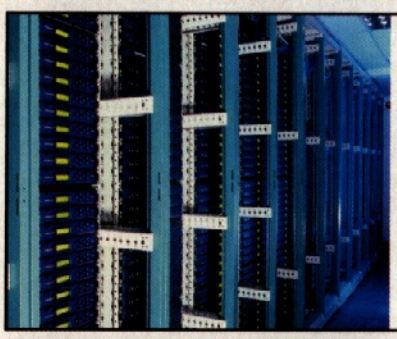

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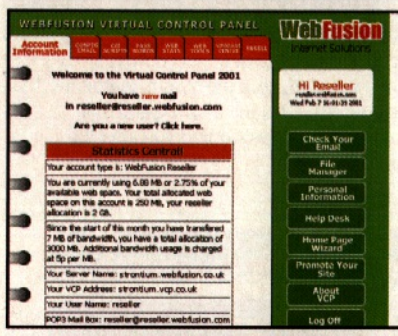

Virtual Control Panel

The Virtual Control Panel 2001 (VCP) allows you to automatically control your web site without any knowledge of programming! You can install discussion boards & guest books in seconds, take complete control of all your e-mail, password protect directories and install FrontPage.

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In brief:

Task: Use the 'related links' feature in IE6
Software I need: Internet Explorer 5.5 or 6
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 10 minutes

ON THE CD

Find related links quickly and easily in IE6

TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF WEB SEARCHING WITH THIS BUILT-IN FEATURE OF INTERNET EXPLORER 6

SEARCHING THE WEB can be an unappealing experience – your best attempts to find relevant information often sees you struggling in a swamp of dead or completely unrelated links. The traditional next step here is to try more of the same, only to be bombarded with another assault of inconsequential nonsense.

It's strange that this long-winded route is seen as the optimum method for finding your way around the Internet, especially as Internet Explorer has an option to make the process a whole lot easier. Granted, it doesn't provide you with as many choices as going through a search engine, but it does manage to cut down on the useless clutter you'd normally have to wade through.

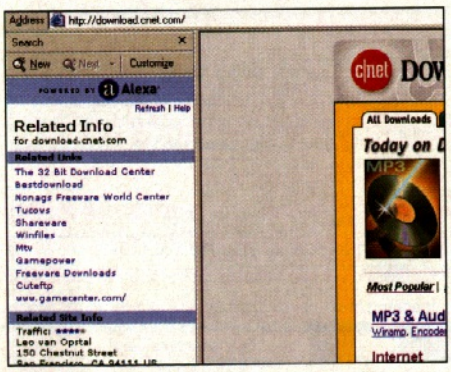
Known as Related links', this option gives you links to a series of Web sites classed as similar to the one you're currently visiting. These links appear in the Explorer bar to the left of the page, so you don't even have to leave the page you're working on. With this option, you should be able to find your way around the Net far more easily.

1 A Web page

The first part of the process is one you should hopefully be well aware of. All you have to do is visit any site you wish – we've gone for **www.download.com** simply because it is a well-known site with plenty of visitors.

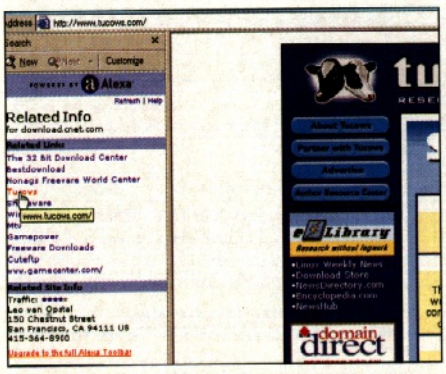
2 The links option

With your page up on screen, you can now access the 'related links' option. To get to this, go to 'Tools', then choose 'Show related links' from the Tools menu. This automatically brings up the links panel on the left of Internet Explorer.



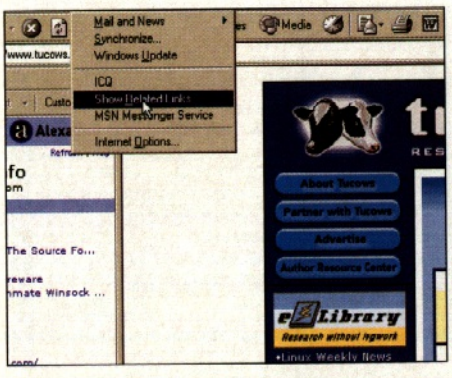
3 The links bar

You'll now be presented with a list of sites within this new panel. Depending on the original site in question, the quality of your results will vary according to how similar the new sites that Alexa finds are to your starting point.



4 Open the links

One of the main advantages of using this method to a normal search engine is that you can view the results without having to open new pages. Because the info sits in a dedicated panel, they are visible even when you're looking at one of the sites.



5 More related links

Once you've found a site, you can then view the related links of this site. This way, you can guarantee that you end up with only the most relevant of Web pages up on-screen, and with the minimum of effort as well.

In brief:

Task: Discover this nifty alternative emailer
Software I need: Eudora 5.1

Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 30 minutes

ON THE CD

Change your email habits with Eudora 5.1

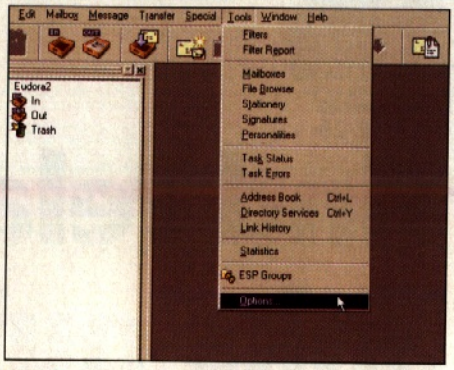
EUDORA IS THE MOST CREDIBLE RIVAL TO MICROSOFT'S OUTLOOK EXPRESS. LEARN THE FUNDAMENTALS WITH OUR EASY GUIDE

AS WE HOPEFULLY showed on pages 36-42, there are lots of decent alternative email programs to wean you off your addiction to Outlook Express. The most feature-laden of these is Eudora 5, which contains everything you could possibly need in an emailer, plus extras that you won't find in Outlook Express.

While many email applications go for unique selling points, Eudora manages to encapsulate the whole range of functions without losing its unique personality. From the basics of setting up and using an email account, through to more advanced concepts like creating mail filters, Eudora has it all. In short, this is the only package out there that really challenges Outlook Express' functionality.

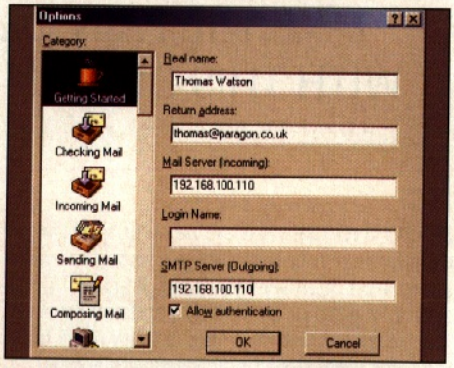
What's more, when you've grown tired of standard emailing, Eudora still has some neat tricks to ensure that your messaging is as fresh as possible. The chilli ratings system is particularly nice to use, and adds an extra dimension to sending and receiving emails.

At the very least, Outlook Express die-hards should give Eudora a try.



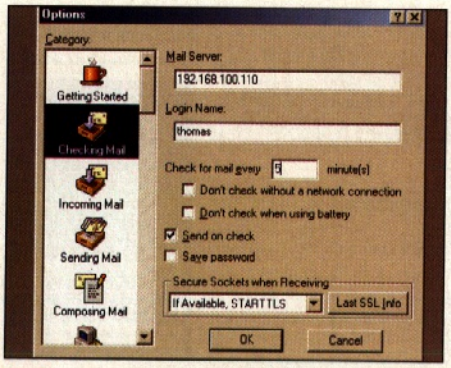
1 Set up an account

Before you start anything, you have to sort out a new email account. This follows similar principles to those you'd see in Outlook Express. To start it off, go to 'Tools' in the main menu, then choose 'Options' from the drop down menu.



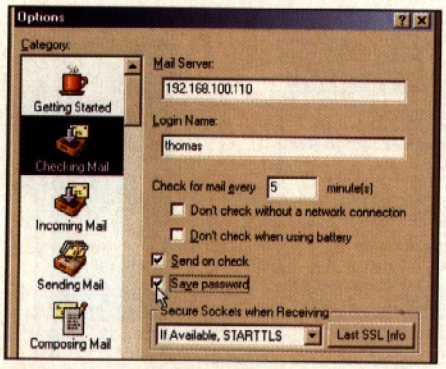
2 First account options

On the account setup screen, enter your name and email address. After this, enter your login name, the Incoming mail server address (you can find this from your ISP), and the Outgoing server address, if different.



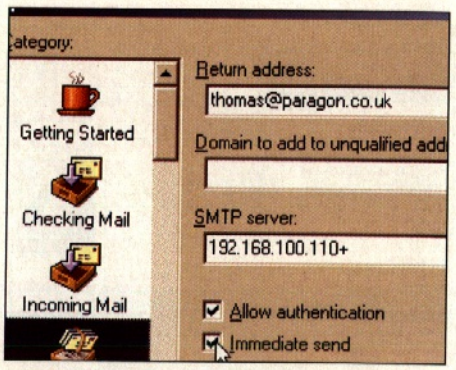
3 Automatic checks

If you're working with an unmetered or always-on connection, it's worth changing the settings found under the 'Checking mail' tab. To set up an automatic check for email, enter a figure in the box as shown above.



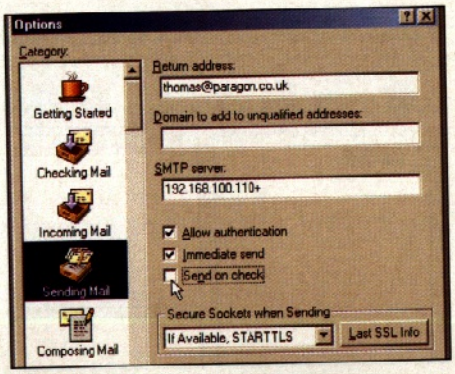
4 Save password

If you use your email program a lot, it can quickly become tiresome to have to keep entering your password every time you want to check for new mail. To alleviate this stress, tick the 'Save password' check box.



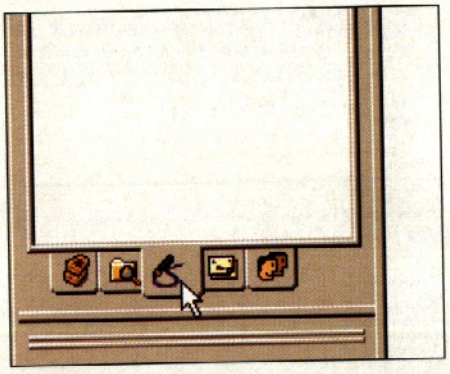
5 Immediate send

It's very easy to click the 'Send' button, only to realise later that the message has only been sent to the 'drafts' folder. To remedy this situation, tick the 'Immediate send' box – this means that pressing on 'Send' will do just that.



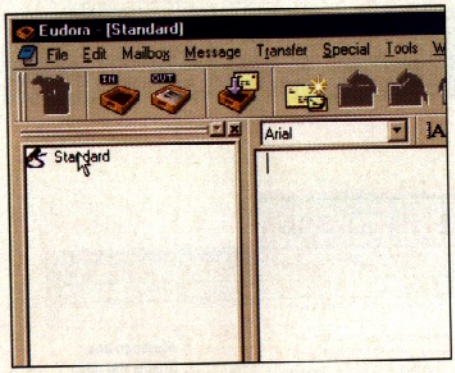
6 Don't send on check

Another blight can come when you're in the middle of writing an email, and the 'Auto check' kicks in. Unless you specify otherwise, the current mail will be sent with this check, so untick the 'Send on check' box to sort this out.



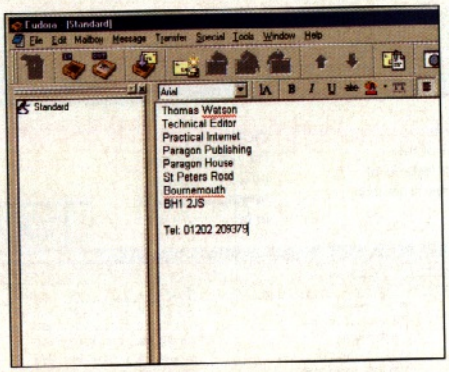
7 Signatures

Adding signatures to your emails is a good way to personalise messages or give them a professional look. You can find the signature options in the toolbar situated under the mail folders icons. This lets you access key features.



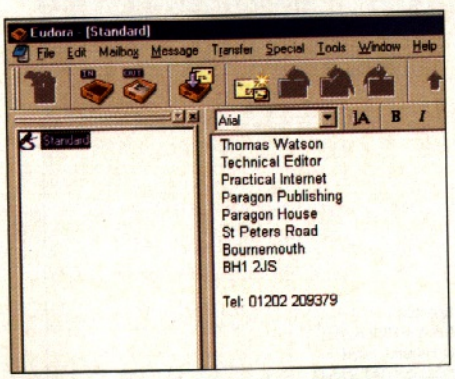
8 Open the default

The 'standard' signature is the one that will be used by default on each new mail you write. In effect, this signature is nothing more than a text file added to all new emails. To open the default signature, double click on the icon.



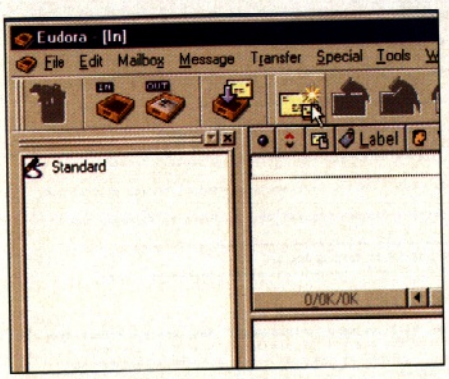
9 Sign your name

Now, type your new signature to act as the default. You can add whatever you like, but it's common to see name, title, address and phone number here. Including your email address is irrelevant, for obvious reasons.



10 Save the signature

Click the 'Close button' icon at the top-right of the signature window. You'll be asked if you want to save the file – choose 'Yes'. Whenever the 'Standard' option is ticked on an email, the above text will be sent below the message you create.

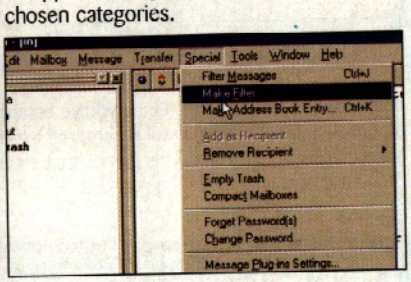


11 Writing messages

There are several options when creating a new email message. You can either click on the icon in the main toolbar, go to 'Message', 'New Window', or simply press 'CTRL' + 'N' on the keyboard. Each does exactly the same thing.

Eudora filters

LIKE ALL THE best email programs, Eudora comes equipped with a range of features aimed at giving you full automated control of incoming messages. Known as 'rules' in Outlook Express, Eudora refers to these options as 'filters', but the role's the same. Basically, you choose a series of options to be applied to any email fitting into the chosen categories.

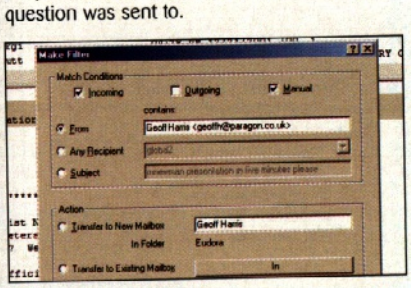


Make filter

The first step on the route to making a filter is to go to 'Special' then 'Make filter'. To make it easier, ensure that you have an email from the person you'd like to filter out selected within the Inbox.

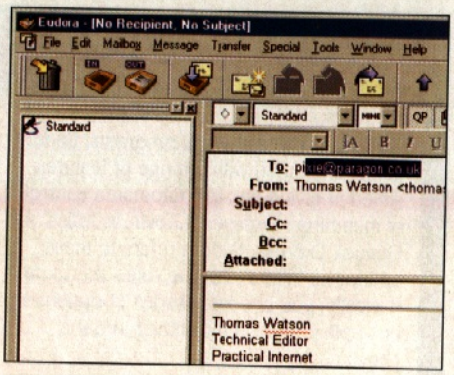
An address to filter

Working from the currently selected message, you'll be presented with the choice of either filtering the sender or the recipient fields. The latter of these lets you select individual recipients from the list of those the email in question was sent to.



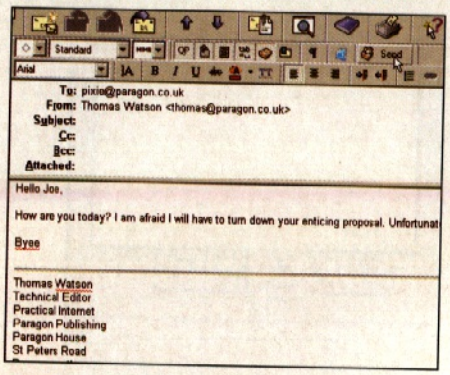
Where to put it

Below this is the section devoted to setting up a location to filter messages to. By default, a new mailbox will be set up dedicated solely to the person in question, but the 'Delete message' option is a good one for persistent junk mailers.



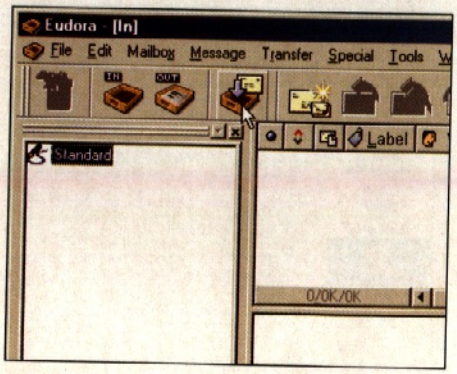
12 Address auto-complete

The Address auto-complete function is designed to save you time. Once you've entered an email in the 'To' field, it will be entered into the 'auto-complete' database. This means that entering the first letters completes the address.



13 Composing and sending

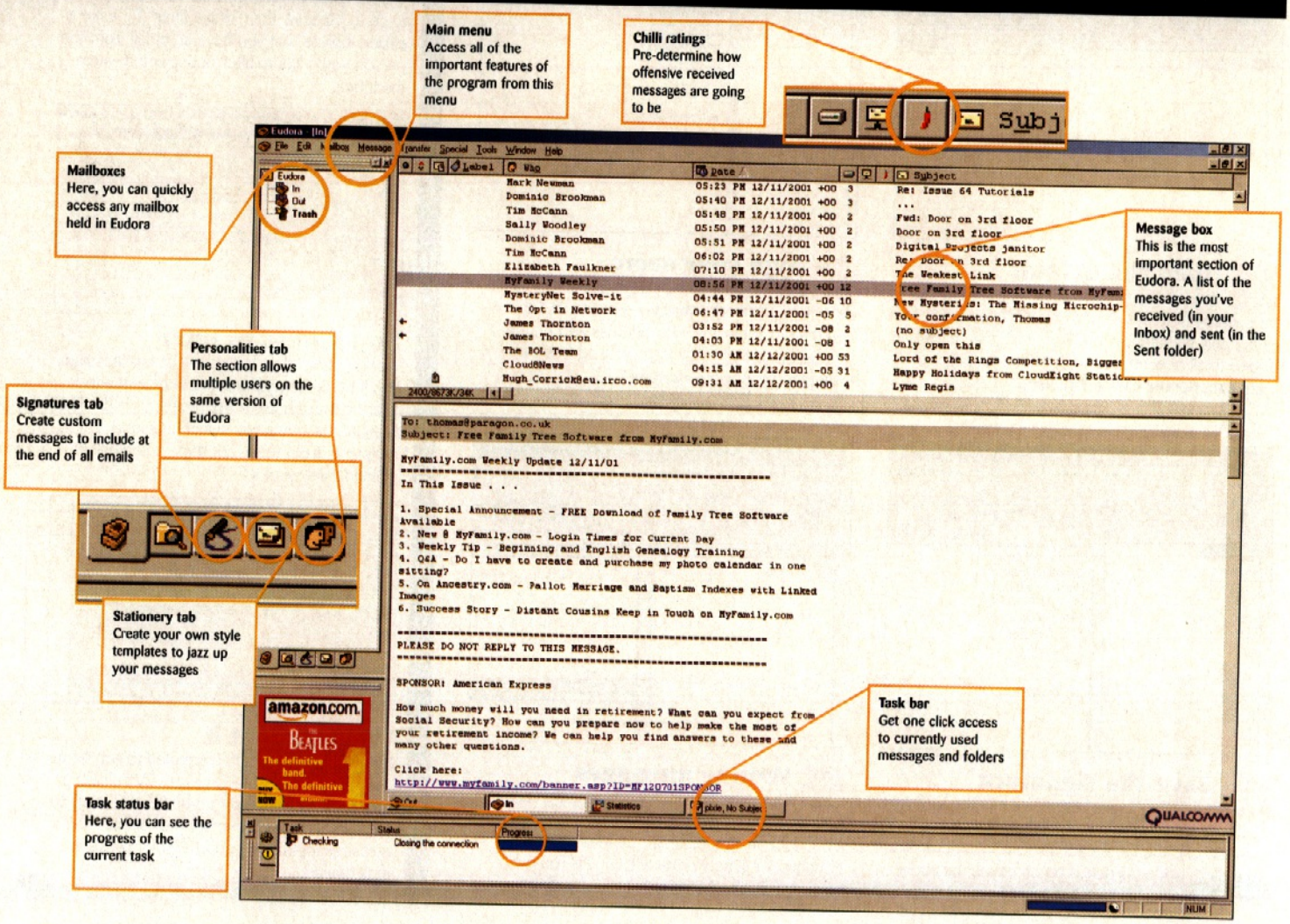
Composing emails is simple. If you selected the relevant option, you'll see your signature as you write the message. After you've finished, either click on the 'Send email' icon in the main toolbar, or press 'CTRL' and 'E' on the keyboard.

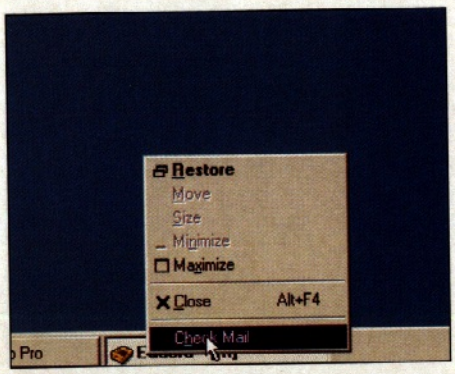


14 Checking for mail

As with all email clients, Eudora gives you the standard options to check for mail. To perform this, either click on the 'Check mail' icon as shown above, or press 'CTRL' and 'M' on the keyboard. Either of these checks your mail account for you.

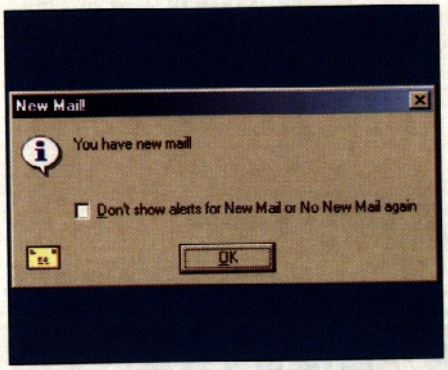
The Eudora interface





15 Eudora's own

Having to maximise the emailer each time you check for messages is annoying. Eudora has a solution for this. When the program is open but minimised, right click the Windows taskbar tab, then choose 'Check Mail' from the drop down menu.

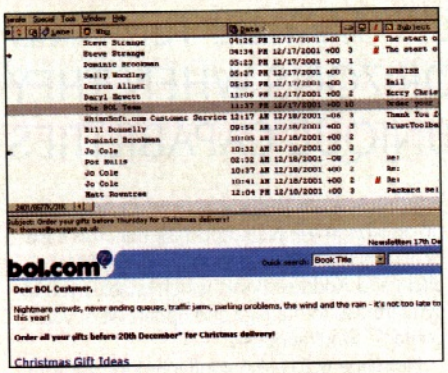


16 You've got mail

Unlike many other email clients, Eudora has a built-in message notifier, to show when you have new mail. This can prove to be a hindrance, though, so we'd suggest getting rid of it. This way, you'll be able to get to your messages much more quickly.

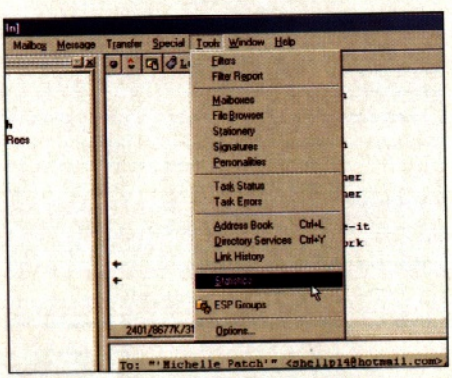
17 Added extras

Now let's explore some of the features unique to Eudora. The most accessible function of Eudora is the 'chilli' section, which allows you to see how rude the content of a message is. To turn this on, go to 'Tools', 'Options', and then 'Moodwatch'.



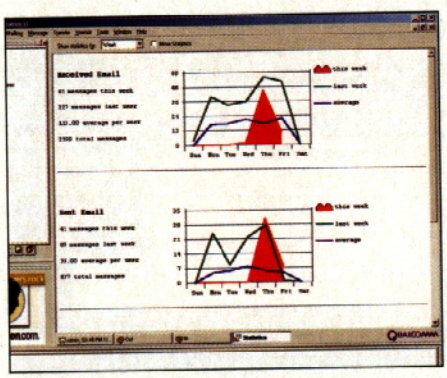
18 Red hot messages

With the 'moodwatch' system switched on, you get an idea of how offensive a message may be. You can also set Eudora to keep tabs on your outgoing messages. This way, you can ensure that your latest rant and rave doesn't offend your boss.



19 Statistics, statistics

Another feature unique to the latest version of Eudora is the 'Statistics' section. Okay, so this is more of a 'fun' item than the moodwatch, but it still gives you an insight into your email habits. To access this, go to 'Tools', then 'Statistics'.

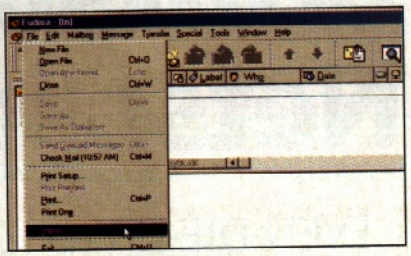


20 The graph of shame

In the Statistics section, you'll be presented with a series of graphs, highlighting your email activity since you installed Eudora. If you use the program at work, you'll probably find that you've been sending far too many emails.

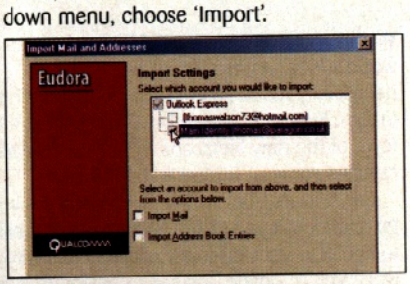
Importing email

TURNING TO ANOTHER email client is great news in some ways, but it can lead to untold problems if you find yourself stranded without any of your old emails or address book entries. Thankfully, Eudora has an easily accessible setting which enables you to import all of your email settings from Outlook Express. Read on to find out how.



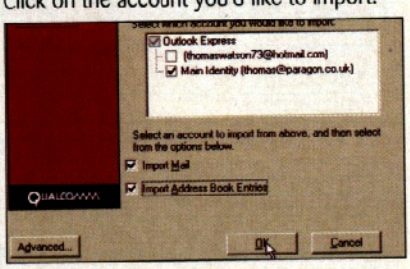
The Import option

The first step along the road to importing your messages from a different email client into Eudora is simple. Go to the main menu, then click on 'File'. From this drop down menu, choose 'Import'.



Choose an account

On the Import screen, you'll be asked to select an account. Eudora displays those that it has found within the Outlook Express set-up, saving you the hassle of entering account information manually. Click on the account you'd like to import.



What to import

Next up, you're asked what you'd like to import from the account in question. For full import facilities, click on both the 'Mail' and 'Address book' buttons. When you're finished, click on 'OK', and the account info will be imported instantly.

In brief:

Task: Using Netscape 6.2
Software I need: Netscape 6.2 on the CD
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: It's up to you

ON THE CD

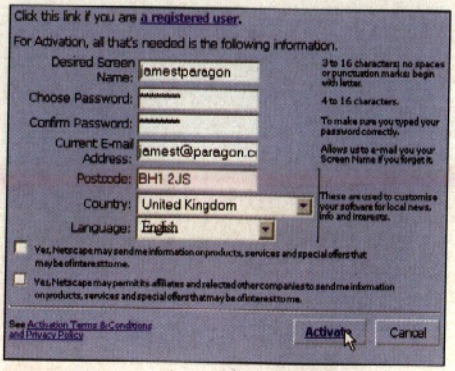
Improve your browsing with Netscape 6.2

EVEN DIE-HARD IE USERS MAY BE TEMPTED TO EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS WHEN THEY SEE NETSCAPE'S UNIQUE CAPABILITIES

WHILE INTERNET EXPLORER remains the world's most popular browser, it doesn't necessarily follow that it's the best of the bunch. In fact, there is a perfectly worthy rival in the form of the new Netscape 6.2 browser, which reaches some of the parts that IE can't.

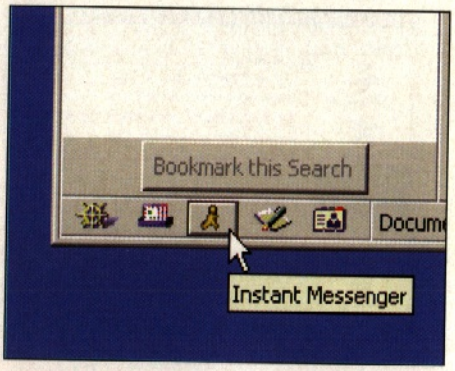
For starters, the browser includes a built-in Instant Messaging client, giving you the ability to speak to your buddies quickly and easily while you're online. Instead of having to launch an entirely different program, you can access the Instant Messaging utility simply by clicking on an icon in the Netscape Task Bar. This ease of access is also found in the improved Mail client and Address Book, which enables you to synchronise to manage and update all of your contacts simultaneously.

Netscape 6.2 is also configured for use with Windows XP. This allows owners of the new operating system to take advantage of the browser's extra features that aren't employed in Internet Explorer, such as Instant Messaging, a Bookmarks manager and the ability to customise the user interface.



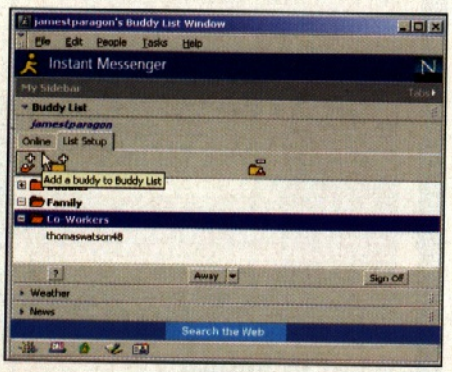
1 Activate screen name

Install the browser from this month's cover CD and then activate your account. When prompted, choose the option to create a new activation and click 'Activate'. Enter your personal details and click 'Activate' to confirm.



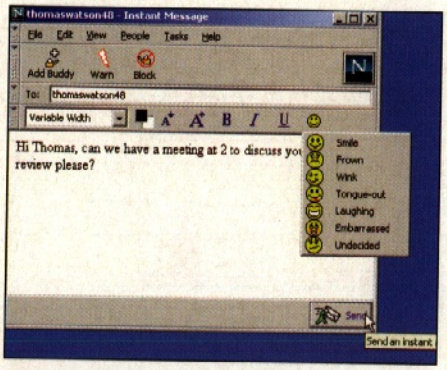
2 The task bar

Now launch Netscape by double-clicking the icon on your desktop. The task bar is located at the bottom left-hand corner of the browser and gives you instant access to various handy utilities. Click on the 'Instant Messenger' icon.



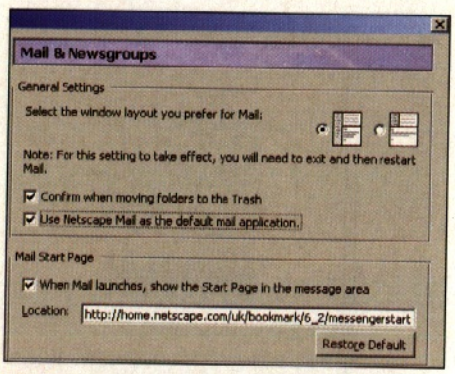
3 Your Buddy List

At the Sign on screen, enter the password specified earlier and click 'Sign on'. To add new contacts, click the 'List Setup' tab. Select a folder to add the person to and click 'Add Buddy'. Enter the screen name of the person you wish to insert.



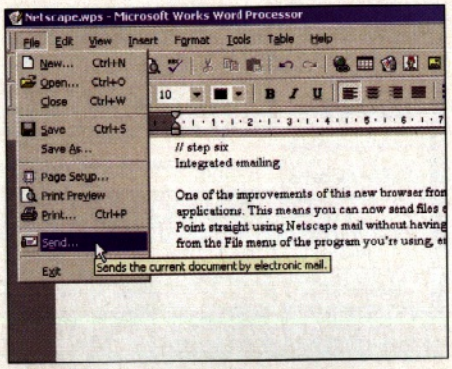
4 Send a message

To send an Instant Message to somebody, double click on their name in your Buddy List. Click into the message window and type your greeting. Add an Emoticon by clicking the smiley face icon and choosing an image. Click 'Send'.



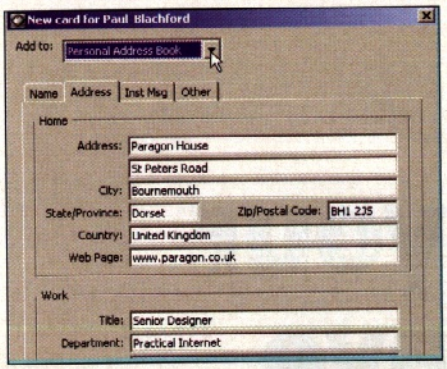
5 Netscape Mail as default

One of the features of this new version is its closely-integrated mail client. To set Netscape as your default mail client, choose 'Preferences' from the 'Edit' menu and click 'Mail & Newsgroups'. Tick 'Use Netscape' as the default mail option, then 'OK'.



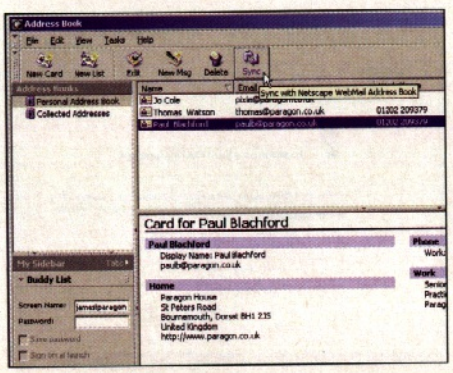
6 Integrated emailing

Integration with other applications is now much improved. You can send a file using Netscape Mail without leaving the application that created it. Choose 'Send' from the File menu of the program you're using, enter the address and click 'Send'.



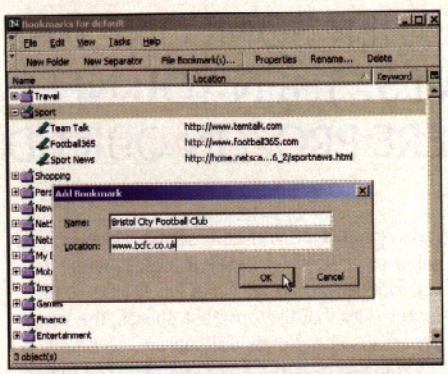
7 Address Book Entries

To access your personal address book, return to the main Netscape interface and click the 'Address Book' icon in the Task Bar. Click 'New Card' and enter the relevant details. Click the top tabs to enter more information, then click 'OK'.



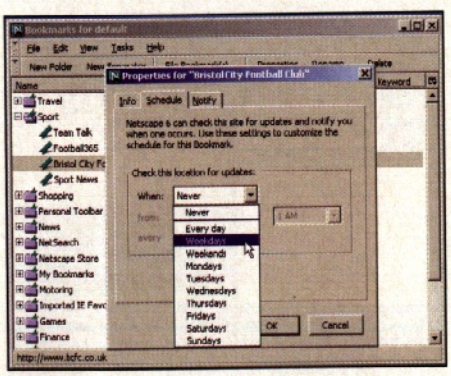
8 Synchronise with Mail

Another good feature is being able to synchronise your contacts with your Netscape Mail client. Start by clicking the 'Synchronise' icon in the Address Book toolbar. Whenever any changes are made, they will both update automatically.



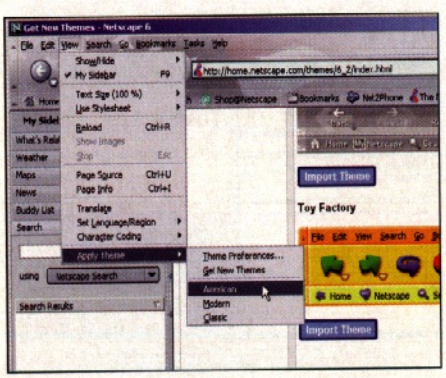
9 Add Bookmarks

Netscape's Bookmarks Manager allows you to organise all of your favourite Web addresses. To add a new Bookmark, select a folder and choose 'Add Bookmark' from the 'File' menu. Type the URL of the link you wish to add.



10 Bookmark updates

Netscape can now check your Bookmarks for site updates. To set this up, click 'Properties' from the 'File' menu and select 'Schedule'. Choose how often you want the checks to be, click the 'Notify' tab and decide how to be notified.

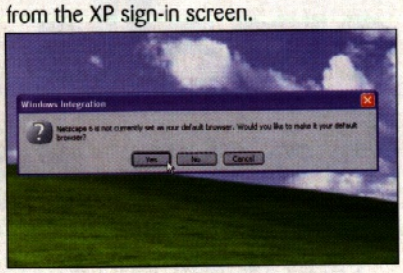


11 Customise the interface

To change the Netscape interface, choose 'Apply Theme' from the 'View' menu and click 'Get New theme'. This will take you to the Theme Park, where you can access skins. Click 'Download' and restart Netscape to make the change.

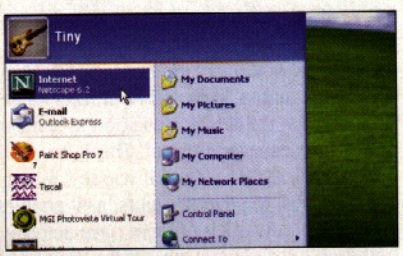
Integration with XP

ONE OF THE key updates to Netscape 6.2 is its support for Windows XP. Whereas previous versions of Netscape 6 didn't allow access from the XP start-up menu, you can now configure the operating system for easy access. Plus, you can receive notification of new Netscape mail from the XP sign-in screen.



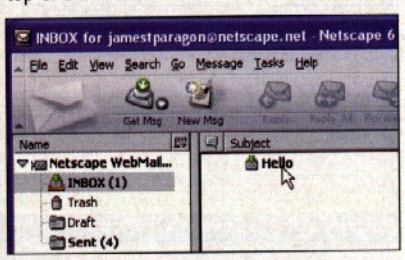
Set as default browser

When you first install Netscape 6.2 on Windows XP you will be asked whether you would like to set the program as your default browser. Once you have selected 'Yes', click the 'Next' button to proceed with the change.



Access the browser from the Start menu

Now you can easily access the browser from the XP Start menu. Click on the 'Start' button in the bottom left-hand corner of the interface and select the 'Netscape 6.2' icon. This will appear in a separated section in the top of the menu.



View incoming email

Once you have set Netscape Mail as your default email client, you will automatically be notified of any new messages whenever you sign into XP. Here you can access the mail straight away simply by clicking on its subject line.

In brief:

Task: Find out when your sent emails are read
Software I need: Sent There Pro 3.0
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 10 minutes

ON THE CD

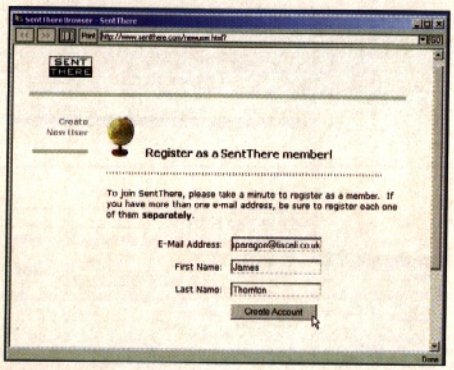
Check if your emails have been read

WANT TO KNOW WHETHER SOMEONE HAS READ YOUR EMAILS? THEN YOU NEED SENTTHERE PRO, ON OUR CD

EVER GET THE feeling that someone is ignoring your email? Maybe a prospective employer, or partner? Now you can confirm or deny your suspicions thanks to SentThere Pro, a small program that notifies you as soon as a recipient reads the message you sent. This is an immediately useful feature if you're sending business mail to several clients, as it enables you to find out which of them have actually bothered to read your messages. The software is easy to use and provides on-demand notification for all the email messages. This means that once you have sent a message, you will receive a report detailing exactly when it was opened and read – if at all. Thanks to the technology that the program utilises, the whole process is completely transparent, so there's no need to worry about anyone finding out that you've been keeping tabs on them. The professional edition of SentThere, which can be found in the Tutorials section of this month's cover disc, boasts full integration with the most popular email programs such as Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger.

1 Create a new account

Install and run the program from this month's disc, making sure to extract the necessary file when prompted in the software setup. Once installed, open SentThere Pro and click on the 'New User' button in the SentThere Login window.

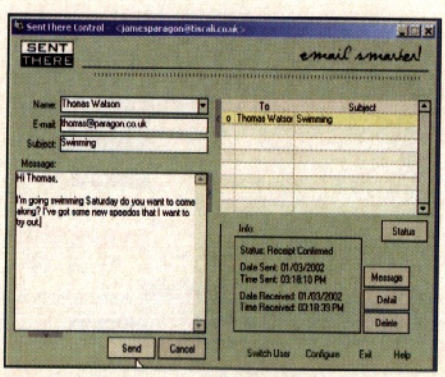


2 Register as member

Before you can use the service you need to register as a member. Enter your name and email address in the form and click 'Create Account'. If you have more than one email address, you need to register each of them separately.

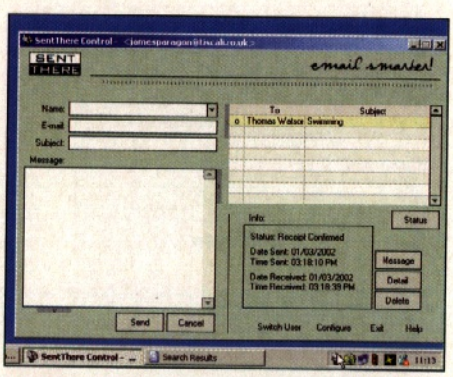
3 Log in to SentThere

An account password will be emailed to you. To change details, type your email address and password in the SentThere browser to access the Members Area. To sign in, enter your email address and password in the Login window.



4 Send your message

To send a message, enter the recipient's details and type the message. Click the 'Send' button. The message will appear in the Receipt Centre. You can manage these messages using the Message, Detail, and Delete buttons.



5 Check the message status

To check the status of your message, click 'Status'. An 'o' next to your message indicates a new receipt. You can also click the message for a report. The SentThere icon in the system tray will let you know if there's been a receipt.

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OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

In brief:

Task: Add a search engine to your site
Software I need: None

Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 30 minutes

Create a custom search engine for your site

A SEARCH ENGINE CAN MAKE YOUR SITE LOOK MORE PROFESSIONAL AND DRASTICALLY IMPROVE NAVIGATION

WEB USERS ARE addicted to search engines, and not without reason. When used properly, they provide fast and easy access to precisely the information you need from the Net. By providing a search engine on your Web site, you'll really make visitors feel like they're in control of your pages.

Thankfully, adding a search engine to your site is now easier than ever with the wonderful FreeFind service, which bills itself as the original and best in the search engine world. This tutorial shows you how to make a search engine that fits in perfectly with your site, even matching your existing design in the way that results are presented. It's all completely free of charge, the only drawback being that visitors will have to cope with a banner advert at the top of the results page.

In addition to the basic search engine, you can also use FreeFind to automatically generate a site map and a 'What's New' page for quick access to the latest updates on the site. You can even get search facility usage reports emailed to you each week.

1 Get started with FreeFind

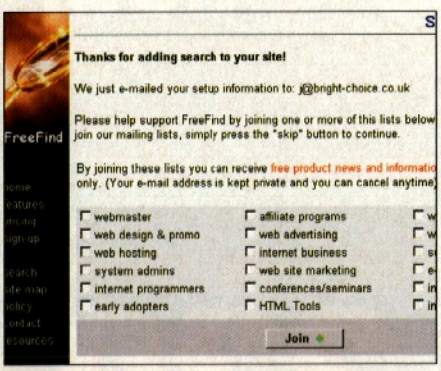
FreeFind's search engines are created and managed entirely via your Web browser. There is no software to download, just a login name and password to remember. To get started, point your Web browser at **www.freefind.com**.

2 Sign up with the service

Enter your Web site URL and email address in the form on the front page of the FreeFind site, and click the 'Instant Signup' button. Now check your email, as you'll soon need the login details provided in a message sent by FreeFind.

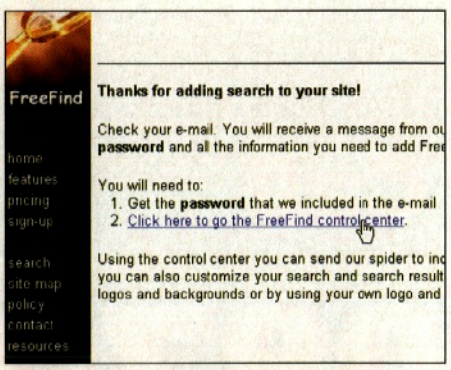
Top Tip!

THERE ARE LIMITS to the wonders of FreeFind. For a start, your site can't exceed 35Mb in size, although that just won't be a problem for the vast majority of sites. Your index won't get updated too frequently either, because the non-paying users of the service are given lower priority and their sites aren't revisited too often. If you find these limits a problem, do consider forking out for the pay service, which will not only remove the banner ad from the page, but also give you various other benefits. You'll be reminded of its wonders every time you log in...



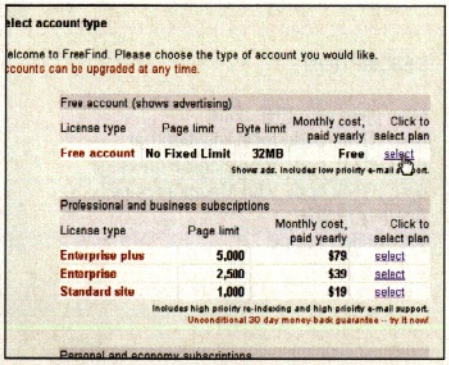
3 Choose free email lists

As one way of supporting the costs of running FreeFind, the owners provide opt-in email lists. You can sign up for these by ticking the boxes of those that interest you and then clicking 'Join', or you can just click 'Skip' to avoid them.



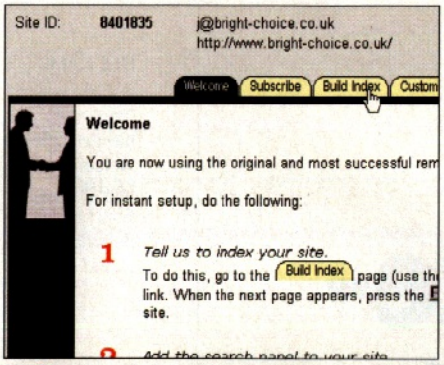
4 Log in for the first time

Once you've got your hands on the email containing your login details, click the link provided to access the control centre. This is where your FreeFind settings will be created, and where you modify the search facility.



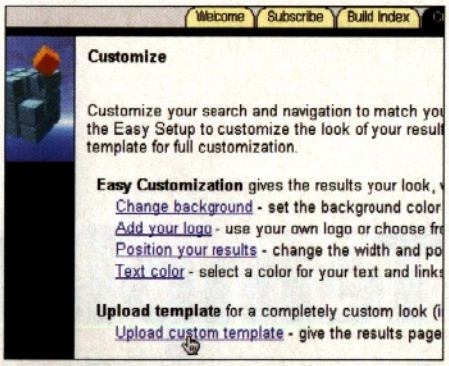
5 Select the free account

You'll be offered the option of paying for the advanced FreeFind service. Whatever your budget, we'd advise checking out the free service before committing to anything. Click 'Select' by the free plan to do this.



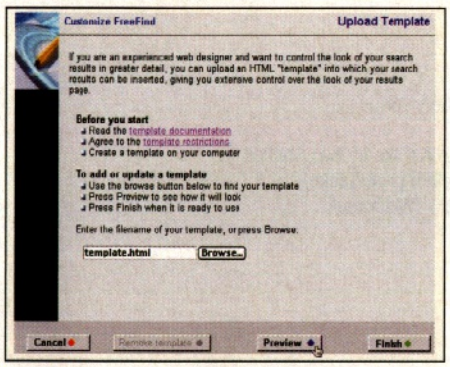
6 Build a site index

The first step in getting your search facility running is to build an index, so that FreeFind knows what your site contains. Do this by clicking the 'Build Index' tab, and then clicking 'Finish' to confirm that you want the index built.



7 Make your mark

The best way to use FreeFind is with a custom template, accessed via the 'Customise' tab of the control centre. This will also mean that most visitors won't notice FreeFind is an add-on, but will think it's an integral part of your site.

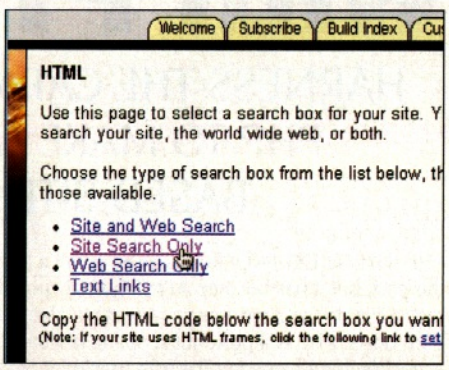


8 Create a template

Make an HTML file containing your site's standard headers and footers. Place the text content where the search results should appear. In the control centre, click 'Browse', locate the template, and then click 'Preview' to see how it will look.

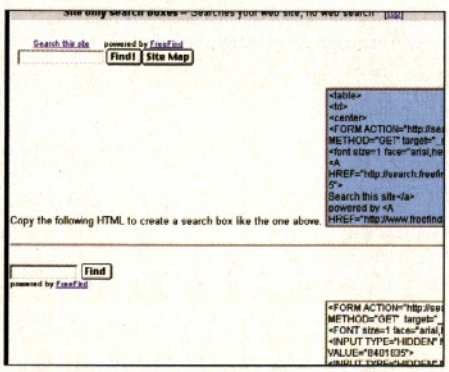
9 Check the template

The design will be previewed in a window that includes a dummy search results page. Click 'Close Preview Window' and then either repeat step eight with a different template or click 'Finish' to confirm the template is right.



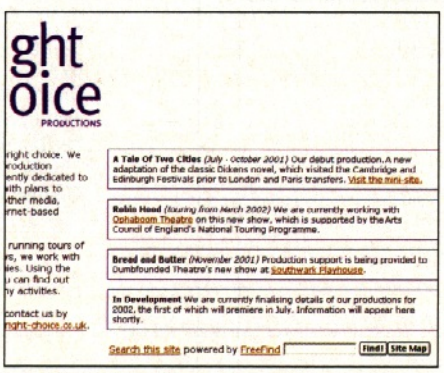
10 Get code for a search box

All that remains to get your site engine up and running is to place a search box on your pages. The code you need for this is accessed via the 'HTML' tab of the control centre. When the page above appears, click 'Site Search Only'



11 Pick a search box design

There are two basic designs for the search box design – one includes a button to give visitors access to a site map, and the other does not. Pick the one you prefer, then copy and paste the code provided into your site's index page



12 Check the finished results

With the search box code pasted into your page, save the file and upload it to your Web server in the usual way. Now visit your site and test the search system by entering a word into the box and clicking 'Find!'.

Top Tip!

IF FREEFIND DOESN'T match your needs, don't despair. There is a range of other excellent free search engines out there. One particularly good one that we've featured in the past is Atomz, at **www.atomz.com**. For even more flexibility, you could get your very own engine installed if your Web space provider allows you to run CGI scripts. This would allow greater personalisation, but in the event it doesn't run smoothly, you may end up spending hours tinkering hopelessly to get it up and running. You should try running a search at **www.hotscripts.com** if this self-scripting method is of interest.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
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OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

In brief:

Task: Use PHP to create a template driven site
Software I need: None (HTML coding)
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

Template-based sites with PHP

HARNESS THE CAPABILITIES OF PHP TO MAKE A TEMPLATE-BASED SITE IN NO TIME

PHP (HYPERTEXT PRE PROCESSOR) is not a technology we've covered in the past, but it has become an increasingly popular and widespread Web technique. In fact, it is now an almost standard offering from most paid-for Web hosts. PHP is a powerful scripting language that is easy to learn, especially for anyone familiar with JavaScript or Perl. Unlike JavaScript, it doesn't rely on browser compatibility.

Another of its attractive features for Web site builders is that it integrates very easily with HTML, meaning that static sites can speedily be converted to all-singing, all-dancing PHP vehicles. This tutorial aims to be a gentle introduction to the language, demonstrating how it can be used to create a template-based site in double quick time.

FILE NAME	DESCRIPTION
cake.php	Main page with PHP code
navigation.inc	Bare HTML code for navigation bar
Welcome.inc	Bare HTML code for welcome message
Madeira.inc	Bare HTML code with Madeira recipe
Cherry.inc	Another recipe
Battenberg.inc	Yet Another recipe
...and so on	

1 Structure of our page

This tutorial is based around creating a recipe site driven by just one PHP file. That file will integrate snippets of HTML into the page according to input from the user, which will be passed via a query string. The file schedule shown above outlines how this will be organised.

```
<html>
<head><title><?php

print("Bake A Cake In Two Shakes ");
if(IsSet($cake)) print($cake);
else $cake = "Welcome";

?>
</title>
</head>
```

2 Start the main page PHP code

You can switch between PHP and HTML as often as you like within a page. You don't even have to start a fresh line. The code here is based around setting the page title but also determines whether a cake has already been chosen by the user.

```
<body>
<h1>Bake A Cake In Two Shakes ... <? print($cake);
?></h1>
<table width="100%">
<tr>
<td width="100" valign="top">
<? include("navigation.inc"); ?>
</td>
<td>
<? include("$cake.inc"); ?>
</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

3 Code the main page contents

After the headline is the code for a simple two-column table. The first column will be used for links, and the 'include' command is used to read in a file called navigation.inc, which we will create later. The main column will contain the cake recipe chosen, or a Welcome message.

```
<p align="right"><i>This page was brought to you
on <?
$now = date("d-m-Y");
print ("$now.");
?></i></p>
</body>
</html>
```

4 Print the date on the page

This section of code prints a date. Unlike JavaScript, PHP is a server-side system, so the server does the processing. This means all browsers will get the same page regardless of their scripting ability. So, the date printed will be based on the Web server's settings.

```
<h4 align="center">
<p><a href="cake.php?cake=Madeira">Madeira</a></p>
<p><a href="cake.php?cake=Pear">Pear</a></p>
<p><a
href="cake.php?cake=Battenberg">Battenberg</a></p>
<p><a href="cake.php?cake=Cherry">Cherry</a></p>
<p><a
href="cake.php?cake=Christmas">Christmas</a></p>
<p><a href="cake.php">Introduction</a></p>
</h4>
```

5 Set up the navigation include file

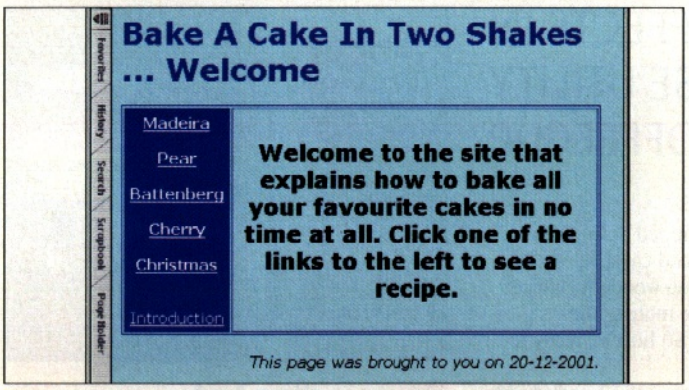
To select a specific cake, a query string is built, using the name of the cake with an initial capital. Remember the code in step three? The value of $cake is what determines the include file loaded for the main page section. So, the Madeira link will lead to Madeira.inc being loaded.

```
Welcome.inc:
<h2 align=center>Welcome to the site that explains
how to bake all your favourite cakes in no time at all.
Click one of the links to the left to see a recipe.</h3>

Madeira.inc:
<p><b>Ingredients:</b><br>
<ul>
<li>200g Plain Flour
<li>1 teasp Baking Powder
...and so on
```

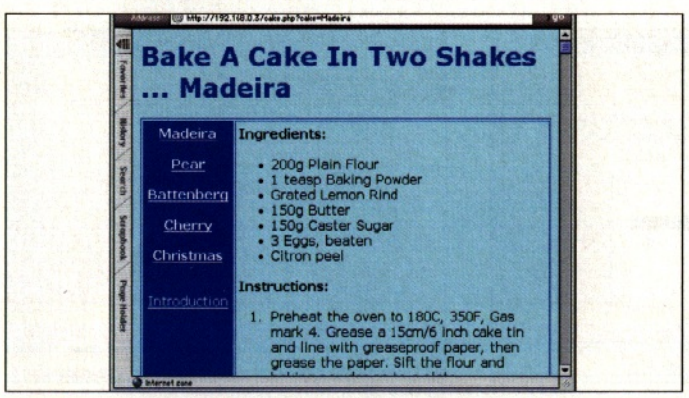
6 Create other include files

Examples of the other include files are shown above. The PHP code defaults to the value of $cake being 'Welcome' if nothing else has been specified. One extract of the cake recipes is provided here in Madeira.inc. Obviously you have to upload the PHP file and the includes to your Web server.



7 Access the page for the first time

The finished page is shown above. You can see that the lack of a cake name in the query string has led to the default Welcome message being loaded. Everything falls apart if you link to a non-existent recipe, or if the user manually alters the query string.



8 Look at an individual recipe

Once a cake name has been clicked on, the recipe appears in place of the Welcome message. The beauty of creating a site in this method is that it becomes very easy to redesign it or present it in a different way. For example, you could make a PHP file that just displays the recipe, so the user can print it

Web resources

PHP Builder
www.phpbuilder.com
A great user-driven site featuring articles about how to do more with PHP and hundreds of code snippets that are available for free download.

PHP Wizard
www.phpwizard.net
Another great PHP resource site, where you will find such useful packages as phpMyAdmin and plenty of help and advice.

PHP Faqts
www.faqts.com/knowledge-base/index.phtml
Got a PHP problem? You'll probably find the answer at this site.

Jargon buster

Query string
This is an extension to the normal page name, which is usually used when filling out a feedback form or entering keywords into a search engine. Instead of just requesting the file cake.php, links in this tutorial are configured to send cake-specific query strings, such as cake.php?cake=Madeira. PHP automatically this into variables, so in the example just given the query string would be accessible via the variable $cake, which would have the value 'Madeira'.

Include file
This is a technical term to describe a file that is intended not to be accessed by itself, but instead to be integrated with others through some trick of programming. This is the correct way to describe all the files that we created in this tutorial with the file extension '.inc'.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

In brief:

Task: Create a Flash movie
Software I need: CoffeeCup Firestarter 4.2
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

ON THE CD

Build a Flash movie with Firestarter

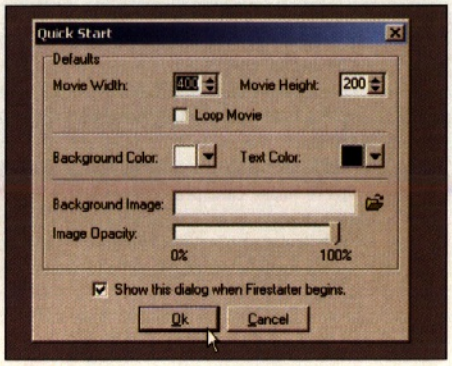
ACHIEVE RED-HOT FLASH EFFECTS IN MINUTES WITH THIS EASY-TO-USE UTILITY FROM THOSE HTML HEROES, COFFEECUP

WHILE IT'S GENERALLY accepted that Macromedia's Flash 5 program is just about the best Web graphics package you'll clap eyes on, the software isn't for everyone.

For starters, it costs £300 a shout and on top of this, many people find themselves overwhelmed by the massive range of features. But there is help for people with neither the money nor the patience for Flash, in the form of CoffeeCup Firestarter.

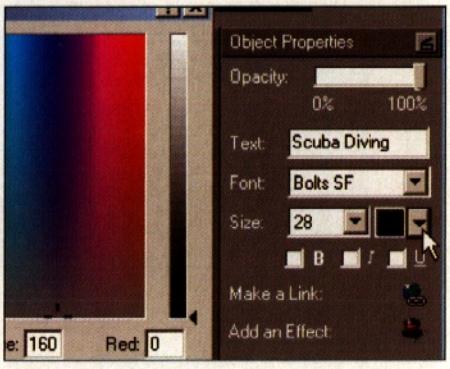
Much like it's rival, SWiSH, Firestarter lets you create your own funky Flash animations, movies and effects through it's stripped down, intuitive interface. Despite its reduced capabilities, the program lets you conjure up wonderful effects with just a few clicks of the mouse. The software comes with over 50 built-in, ready-to-use effects.

On top of this, Firestarter is also bundled with a collection of funky MP3 sounds for use with your projects, a built-in sound editor for fades, echo and reverse, along with the ability to upload your finished production to the Web with the greatest of ease.



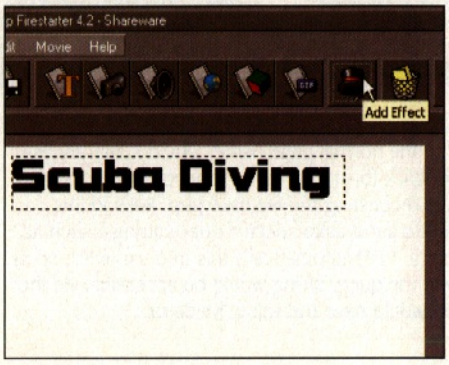
1 Begin new project

On launching, you'll see this window. Choose a size for the Flash movie and pick your background and text colours from the drop down menu. You can use a background image by clicking 'Open File' and choosing a picture. Click 'OK'.



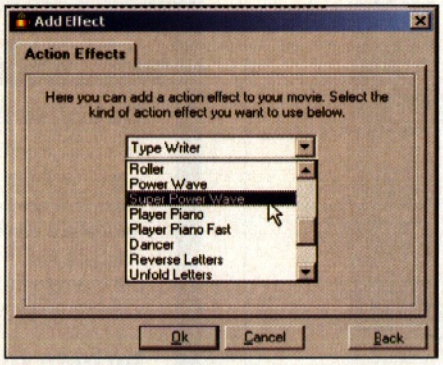
2 Inserting text

To enter your first line of text, click the 'Add New Text' icon in the toolbar. In the Object Properties window, enter your text and choose a font size and colour. You can also embolden, italicise or underline the text if you wish.



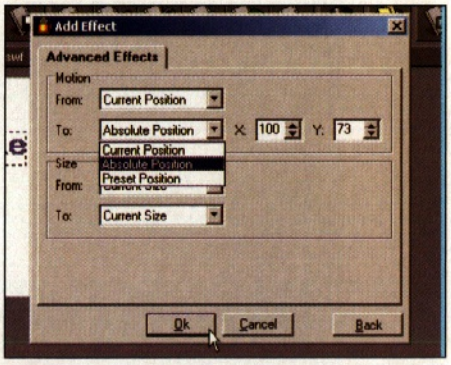
3 Position your text

To move your text around within the main window to determine its starting position, click and drag it. To add an effect to a piece of text, make sure it is highlighted and click on the 'Add Effect' icon in the main toolbar.



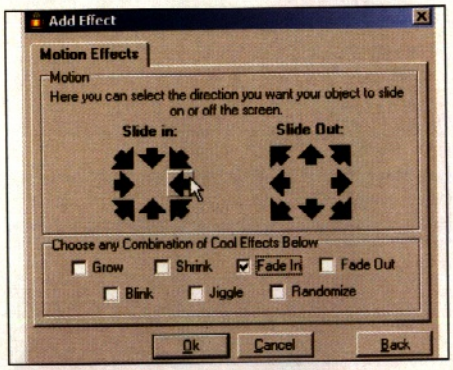
4 Action Effects

You will now see the Effects Styles menu, where you can choose what effect to apply. Click 'Action Effects' to make the letters move or behave in a certain way such as explode, implode, shrink or wave. Highlight the one you want and click 'OK'.



5 Text on the move

As well as these Action Effects, you can set the text to move around the screen in a particular direction. From the Effects Styles menu, choose 'Advanced'. Now specify the X and Y co-ordinates for the start and finish points of the text.

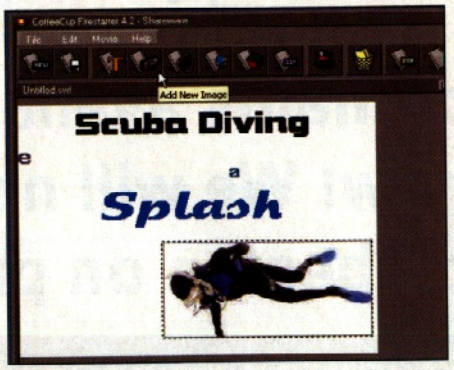


6 Poetry in motion

You could get Firestarter to move the text for you by clicking 'Motion' from the Effects Styles menu. You can choose the direction you want the text to slide in or out of the page and apply any combination of cool effects from those listed.

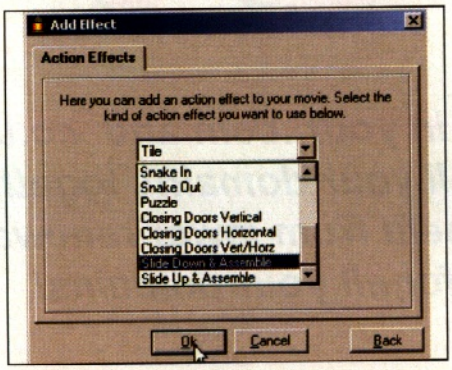
7 Use the timeline

Each part of the movie is named and the length of the clip is represented by a bar in the Timeline. You can shrink or stretch a bar to change the speed, or click and drag each effect and reposition it on the timeline to change the order.



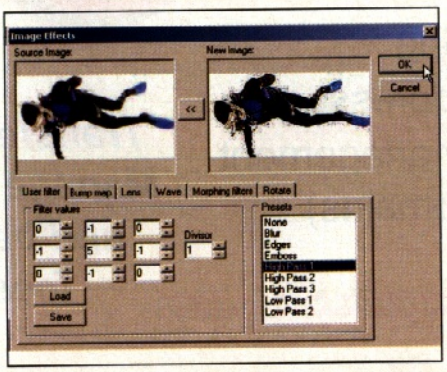
8 Insert images

To add an image, click the 'Add New Image' icon. Now browse your PC's hard drive for the image to insert and click 'OK'. The image will appear in the main window and you can move it to your desired start position by clicking and dragging it.



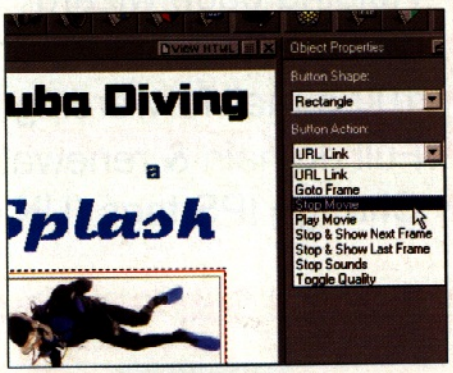
9 Apply image effects

Just as you can add effects to text, you can also animate images within your Flash movie. Do this by clicking the 'Add Effect' icon and choosing an effect as before. You will notice that the range of effects for graphics is different to the text effects.



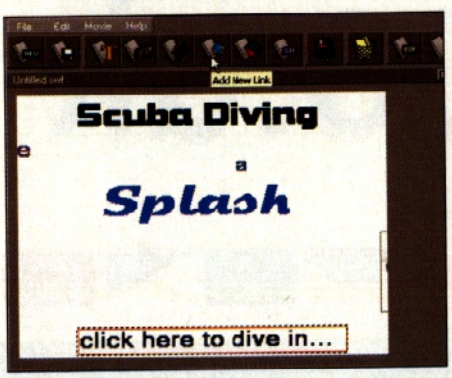
10 Image editing

While it's probably easier to tweak your images in a third party image editor, Firestarter allows some control over image effects through the Object Properties window. Click the 'Manipulate Image' to apply effects such as lenses, waves and blurs.



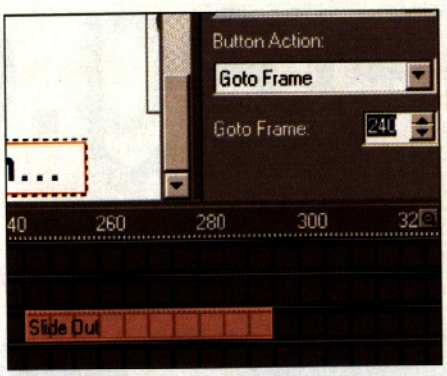
11 Linking images

To apply a hyperlink to an image, highlight the image and click 'Add Link' in the Object Properties window. Now specify a shape for the button and decide what action you want to be performed when the link is clicked.



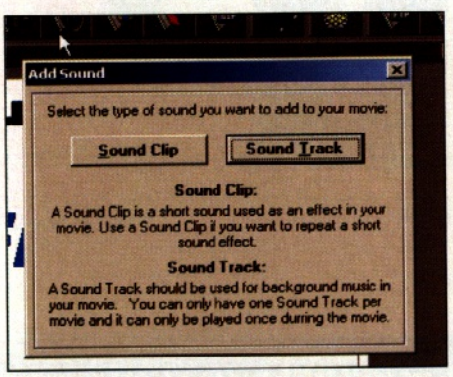
12 Apply text links

To manually add a link to a certain portion of the screen, enter the text as before, then click the 'Add New Link' icon. Click and drag the red link box into position and, if necessary, re-size it by clicking and dragging its edges.



13 Frame jumping

The Goto Frame option can be selected from the Button Action drop-down list in the Object Properties window. Here you can specify a particular frame in the timeline to jump to when the link is clicked.



14 Add a backing track

To add a little more atmosphere to your movie, you can add some background music. Select the 'Add New Sound' icon, then select 'Sound Track'. Now choose a backing track to be played once throughout your movie.

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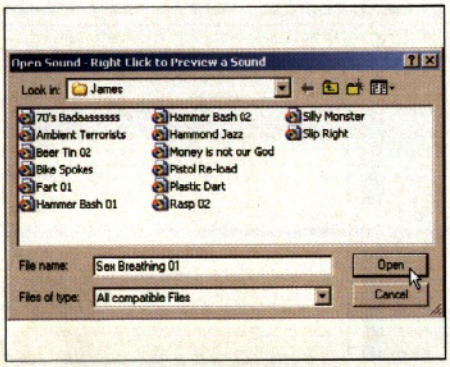


15 Use sound effects

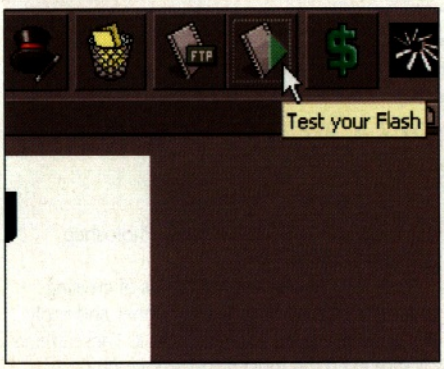
It's also possible to apply different sound effects to your Flash movie. Click 'Add New Sound' then choose 'Sound Clip' from the pop-up window. Pick a sound file from those provided, or use one from your own collection and click 'Open'.

16 Back to the timeline

Return to the timeline to synchronise the sound effect with the movie. To place the sound effect where you want it to play, click and drag the yellow sound bar along the timeline. To add a repeat of the sound effect, click the plus sign in the Cutting Room.

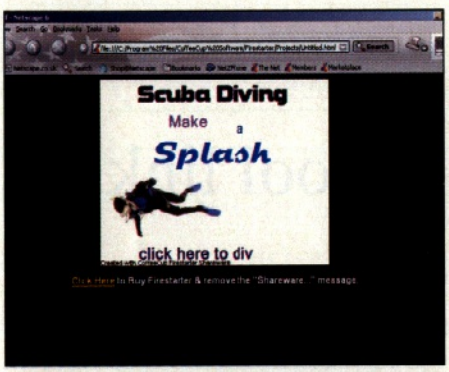
17 Fill the blanks

Before previewing your movie, check all the elements of the timeline to make sure it's correct. If you don't want a piece of text or an image to appear on screen for a certain length of time, you can add blank space using the film reel icon.



18 Launch a preview

To make sure everything plays smoothly, preview your movie before exporting it to the Web. Click on the 'Test Your Flash' icon in the main Firestarter toolbar. It's a good idea to preview the movie while adding each element.



19 Your finished movie

Your Web browser will now launch and the movie will play, provided you have the Flash plug-in. If not, it is available from this months cover disc. Test that everything is aligned and that all of your links are doing what they should.

20 Save your movie

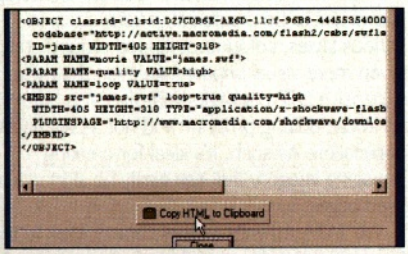
To save the project, choose 'Save As' from the File menu. You have a choice of saving as a Fire project or as a Flash file (SWF). Saving as a Fire project means you can edit it at a later date. If it's a Flash file, it will be optimised for the Web.

Upload your movie

OF COURSE, ONCE you've finished knocking together your Flash creation in Firestarter you'll want to make it available on the Web, otherwise all of your efforts would have been in vain. Luckily, the software makes it easy for you to upload the movie to your site thanks to its built-in FTP utility. This means you can get your project online as quick as a Flash.

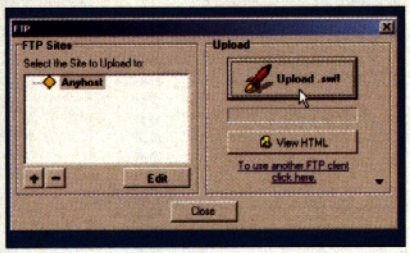
Enter server profile

First click the 'Upload to Web' icon in the main Firestarter toolbar. Now, you must enter the details of the location of your Web site host including your server name, username and password, Web server address and the directory to upload the files to. Click 'OK.'



Copy the HTML

Now you need to capture the HTML needed to display your movie. Click on the 'View HTML' icon in the FTP window then copy and paste it onto the page that you want it to appear in.



Upload the file

Finally, you need to upload the SWF Flash file to your Web space in order to play the movie on your site. To do this, simply click on the 'Upload .swf!' icon in the FTP window and wait for the file to be exported.

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In brief:

Task: Applying effects
Software I need: Photoshop Elements
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 1 hour

ON THE CD

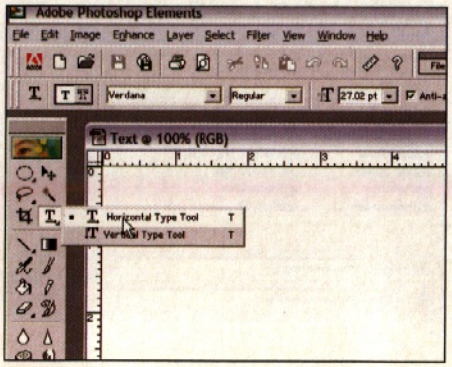
Smarten up your site with Elements

TEXT AND GRAPHICS DON'T HAVE TO BE BORING. USE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TO ADD SOME PIZAZZ TO YOUR SITE

ADOBE'S EXCELLENT PHOTOSHOP Elements allows text to be created at various sizes, in various styles, colourised, flipped around and given more visual impact than even the most expensive DTP packages can offer. It is, after all, an image-editing program and not a page-layout application. As such, it's ideal for creating engaging imagery that can easily be slotted into Web pages.

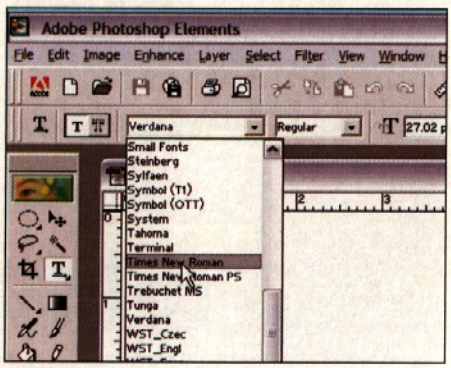
We'll kick off with a blank canvas, look further into generating functional text-based graphics, investigate some of the text warping tools and check out just how Web friendly Photoshop Elements really is.

Once you've grasped the basics of creating your text, it's easy to go a step further and apply all manner of styles and effects to it. These effects will give even the most bland typography a dashing new look, turning it into something that will impress anyone who sees it. And while we're at it, we'll apply some of Elements' graphical effects and filters to a series of images. These tools allow you to improve any sub-standard digital photographs you may have taken.



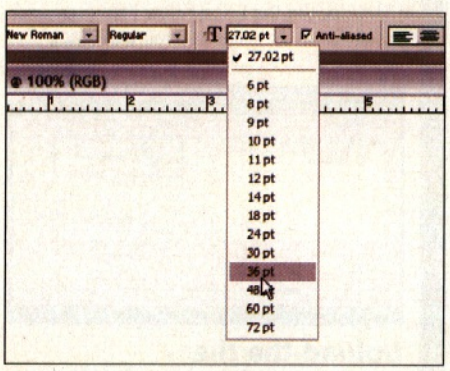
1 Check the text tools

If you click and hold the 'Text' tool in the toolbox, you'll find two options. The 'Vertical Type Tool' means that when you write, each character appears under the previous one. We're going to stay on the level and choose 'Horizontal Type Tool'.



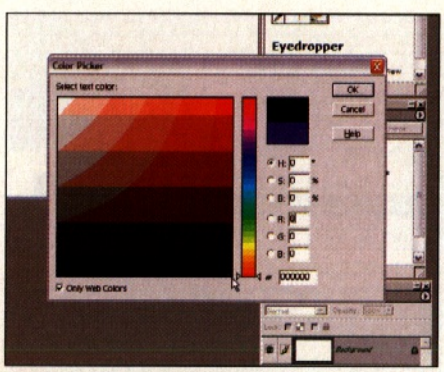
2 Just your type

Choosing the right typeface is always a headache. The choice on offer via the menu in the Text toolbar differs from PC to PC, but every computer has Times, or a variation, installed, so we'll go for Times New Roman in this project.



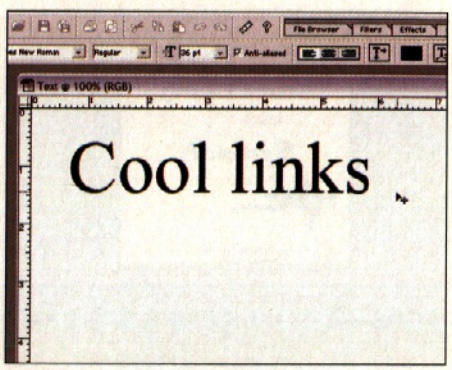
3 Get the point

When it comes to deciding the point size of your typeface, you can either choose from the drop-down list, or type a custom size directly into the box. This is handy for fine-tuning the precise size of your text.



4 An issue of colour

A deft double click in the coloured rectangle between the Text Orientation and Warp buttons brings up the Color Picker. With Web Colors Only ticked, let's start off with a nice, cheerful black as our text colour.

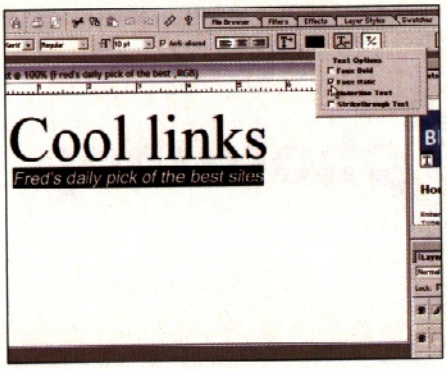


5 The write stuff

It's time to start scrawling, so go back to the Text tool, get the I-shaped cursor into the work area, click once and type. Our font is in black at 36pt, anti-aliased for smoother edges, and a phrase common to many an amateur Web site.

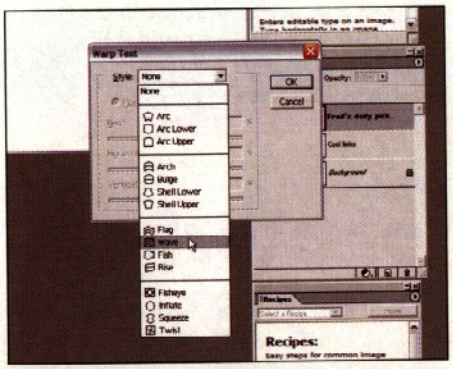
6 New text, new layer

Even when you de-select the Cool Links text, it can still be edited. If you click elsewhere, however, a new text layer is created. Using a different point size, and this time Franklin Gothic as our typeface, we can write on a new text layer.



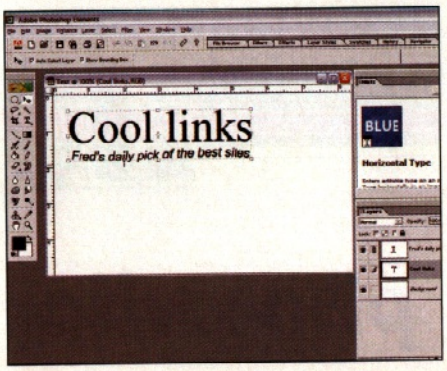
7 A new slant

To the right of the Warp button is another icon giving access to subtle text variations. Faux Italic will slant the highlighted text for a subtle variation. While it's possible to italicise text in HTML, the results are awful.



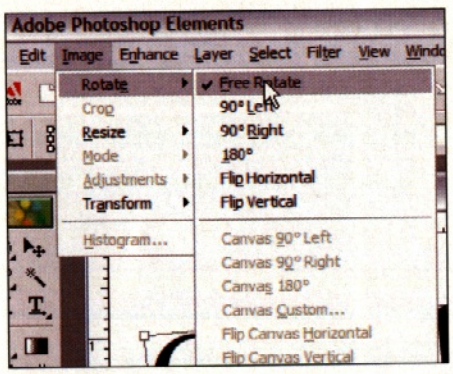
8 Warp factor

For less subtle effects, click on the 'Warp Text' button and take a look at what's under the 'Style' menu. We're going for an attractive Wave style, but experiment with the other entries to see how far out you can take your typography.



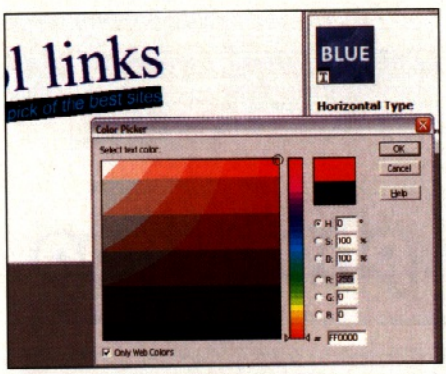
9 Make the link

If you're happy with the positioning of two or more elements, link them so they move together. Make one an active selection by clicking it in the 'Layers' palette, then click in the box to the right of the eye symbol in the adjacent layer.



10 Rotate

Various functions reside under the 'Image' menu, such as 'Rotate'. You can choose a rigid 90-degree left or right rotation, flip the whole lot upside down, or select 'Free Rotate'. This lets you crank the text around to whichever angle you choose.



11 Apply colour

Even when rotated, you can still edit the text. We've unlinked them, highlighted each phrase with the Text tool and gone back to the Color Picker. A cool blue has been applied to the main text, and here we're busy making the strapline red.

Layer Styles

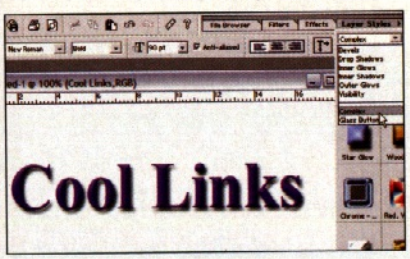
THERE'S NO REASON why you should have to stick with flat-looking lettering when Elements has a wealth of Layer Styles tucked away – you'll see the tab in the top toolbar. Just be careful not to go too nuts. Having some text that is drowning under a deluge of effects can be worse than no effects at all.

Bevelling brilliance

Currently, our Cool Links text is looking more tepid than cool. Clicking on 'Layer Styles' brings up a drop-down menu offering some helpful options. Under the 'Bevels' menu entry is a selection of embossing, ridging and scalloping tools, so pick one and see what happens.

Into the shadows

A Sharp Inner bevel applies a nice three-dimensional effect to the previously flat font. It's as if the lettering has been rendered in relief from the background, thanks to subtle highlights and shading from a light source emanating at the top-right. Let's take it a stage further and scroll down to 'Drop Shadows'



Complex situation

The text appears to stand proud of the background now thanks to a low drop shadow. Simple techniques such as this can add a sense of depth to an otherwise flat-looking piece of text, engaging the eye and making your site stand out. Of course, we could make things more complex by scrolling down to Complex. →

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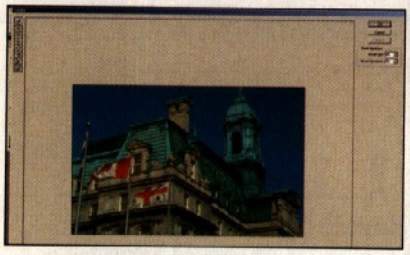
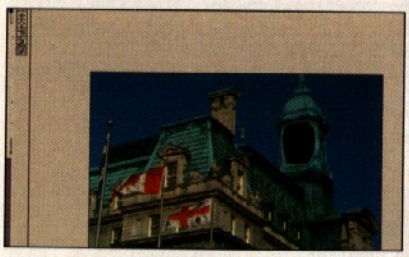
Liquifing

IF YOU'RE AFTER big effects with your images and text, you really can't go wrong with the options available in the Liquify tool. This gives you full control over your image, letting you warp, enlarge and otherwise enhance it. If you've ever used one of those 'family-friendly' image manipulators, you'll know how the Liquify tool works.



The right tool

In order to get the Liquify function to work properly, first choose it from the main menu. You can access this by clicking on 'Filters' then 'Liquify'. This will bring up the above screen, with the tools on the left, and the image on the right.

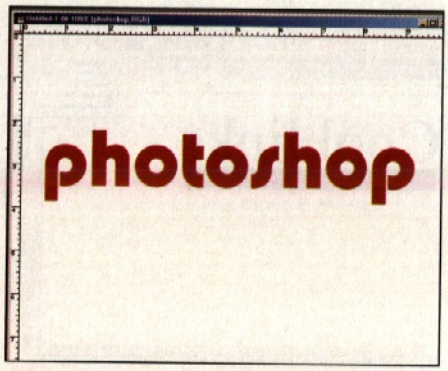


Time to warp

Click on the top icon in the tools palette at the top of the screen – this lets you 'warp' the image, where you can move parts of the image around. The only real way to figure out how this tool works is by playing around with it, so get to know it this way.

More tools

There are plenty of other tools within the liquify option – we've used the 'grow' tool to enlarge one of the flags at the bottom of the image. The main edict here is constraint, though, as you'll quickly find out if you apply grand changes.



12 Merge text and an image

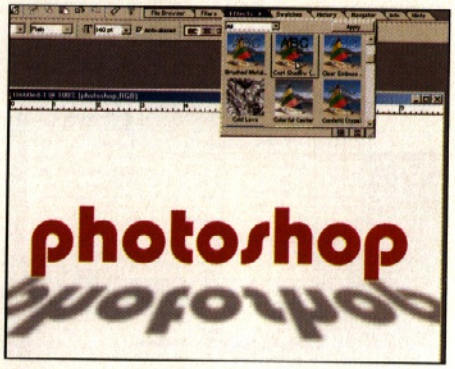
We've created a new document and inserted a simple text layer, complete with the word 'photoshop'. Boost up the size of the text to fit the window – we've altered the colour of the text to make the different effects more apparent.

13 Bold outline

With the text selected, go to the 'Effects' tab at the top of the screen. Find the 'bold outline' option and double click it. This gives your text an attractive outline effect. To try different effects, click 'No' when asked if you want to keep this effect.

14 Brushed metal

One of the most attractive effects can be found under 'brushed metal', which is again housed in the 'Effects' section. Notice that the original text colour is forgotten about, and that you are presented with a silvery-black metal effect.

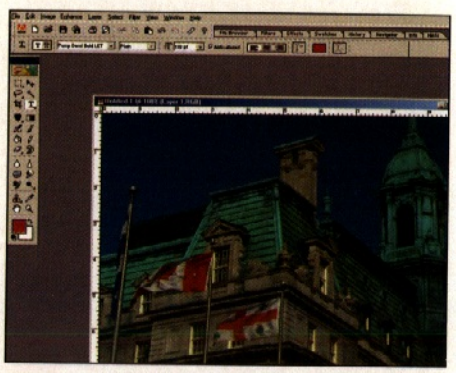


15 Cast shadow

The 'cast shadow' effect is a dazzling tool, which gives your text an impressive 3D look. As you'll see from our example, it's best to make sure that your canvas is much larger than the original text, to ensure that the shadow fits.

16 Sprayed stencil

Our favourite of all the text effects is the 'sprayed stencil' tool. This gives your text the appearance of having been created with a stencil and spray can, and can turn even the most uninteresting of logos into a visual fest.



17 Open an image

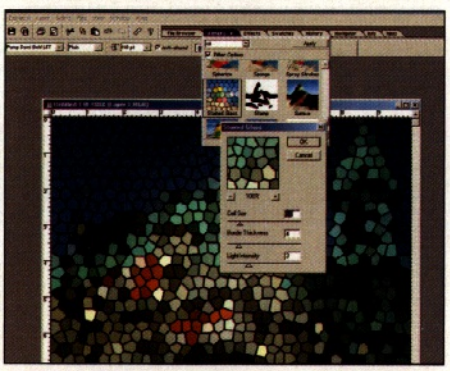
Now, open an image in the Elements interface. We've created another layer above our text and placed the image here – this is to let us mix and match at a later date. For the moment, just make sure that you have a picture open.

18 Applying filters

You can apply all manner of filters to the current image by clicking the 'Filters' tab. Above, we've gone for the 'Dark strokes' look. Like many other filters, this brings up a dialog box, where you can alter specific settings of the filter.

19 Patchwork

To test out more filters, make sure you undo the changes you've just made. One of the most effective and attractive filters is the 'patchwork' tool. This gives a fantastic 3D effect, with the minimum of effort.

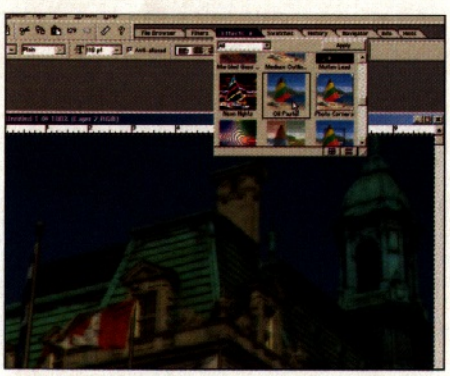


20 Stained glass

Okay, so it's very difficult to tell what the original image was here, but the 'stained glass' filter gives impressive results. Again, experiment with the filter – see what you can achieve by applying another filter on top of this one.

21 Sumi-e

A lovely filter to use when building up an image is the 'sumi-e' option. This brings out the colours of the image, while giving it a slight motion blur. Although the final effect isn't as severe as with some filters, this is perfect for use with layers.



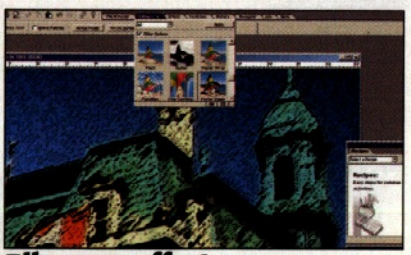
22 Oil pastel

While the Effects tab houses many tools that work better with text, there are also a few nice options for images. We've applied the 'oil pastel' effect in the shot above, which gives your image a lovely painted feel.

23 Put them together

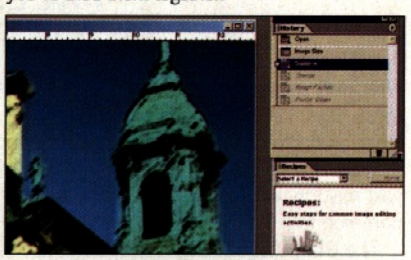
Our reasons for placing the image and text in the same image, on different layers, should be apparent. We've dragged the image layer below the text one, then applied a 'patchwork' filter to the image, and a 'sprayed stencil' effect to the text.

Graphic advice



Pile your effects

While it's all well and good picking and choosing from the impressive array of effects and filters in Photoshop Elements, you're always going to be limited to the basic effects this way. A great way of gaining fabulous 'individual' effects that stand out from the crowd is to pile your effects on top of each other. Okay, so the 'patchwork' tool is good, but applying it to an image which has already had the 'sumi-e' filter run on it gives even better results. Experimentation is the name of the game here – it's impossible to see how two or more effects will work together until you've tried them together.



The 'undo' tool

When you're messing around with filters and effects, it's easy to become lost in a sea of odd-looking layers and images. The most effective tool at your disposal at this point is the Undo option, which lets you move back a step, before the last move you made. If you want to take it a step further, get to know the History palette, which gives you even more control.

A different view

Navigating between the various thumbnails of filters and effects can prove difficult, so Elements has an alternative method of viewing. Click on the 'List' button under the thumbnails, and you'll be shown a list of the effects. Next to the list, you are presented with a thumb of the original and the currently selected effect.

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In brief:

Task: Get to know The GIMP
Software I need: The GIMP and its update
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 1 Hours

ON THE CD

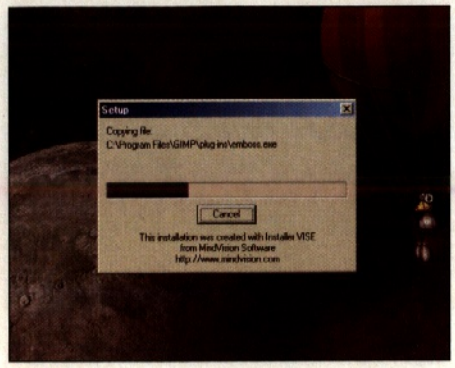
Time to bring out The GIMP

THE GIMP IS AN EXCELLENT GRAPHICS PROGRAM, THAT ALSO HAPPENS TO BE FREE. FIND OUT MORE BELOW

FINDING A GRAPHICS program isn't difficult these days. Let's face it, there are hundreds of them available online, giving the average punter a staggering wealth of choice. Unfortunately, the vast majority of graphics packages fall into a common trap – they cost money.

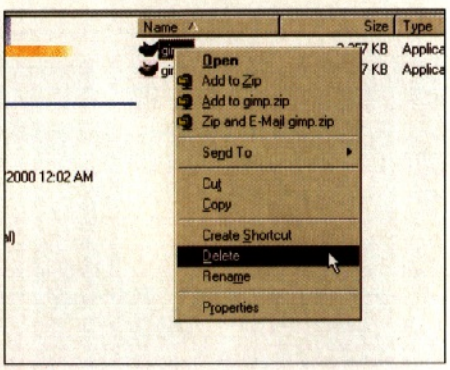
The GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) eschews the traditional shareware route and offers its impressive range of services for free. Forget about the impediments of shareware and trial versions, this is the best freeware image manipulation software you'll find.

The GIMP provides you with all the graphics capabilities you'll ever need, all of which you'd normally have to pay top dollar for. Although you usually expect a freeware package to compete with Microsoft Paint in terms of performance, The GIMP manages to cram in most of the features you'd find in Photoshop. Plug-ins and filters are included as standard, as well as a huge selection of manipulation tools to help you turn even the most mundane of images into works of art. See what The GIMP can do, and then try it out from the cover CD.



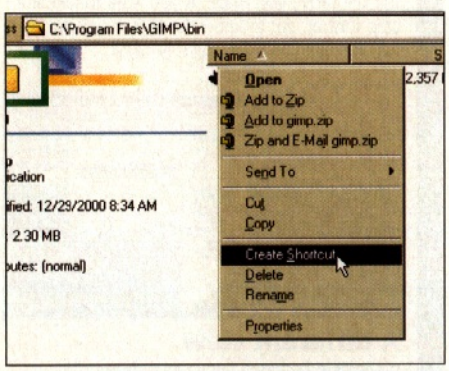
1 Install The GIMP

Before anything else, you'll have to install The GIMP. Make sure you click on the main link on the CD interface, as there is also another .exe file related to The GIMP. After the program has installed, we're ready to use the plug-in file.



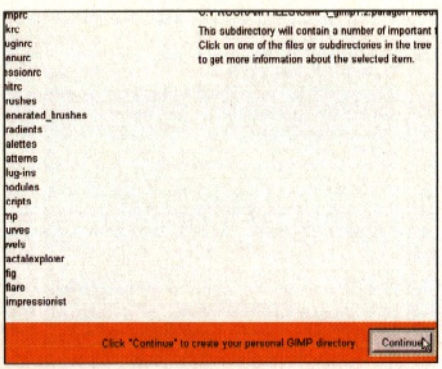
2 Find and replace

Go into the 'bin' folder of the GIMP folders created in your Program Files, and locate the gimp.exe. Copy the update .exe file from the CD into this folder, delete the original gimp.exe, then rename the update file with this name.



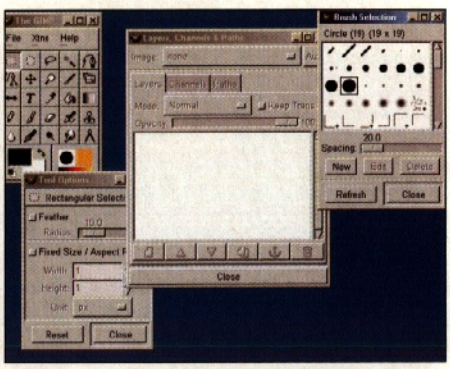
3 A working shortcut

Now select the updated 'gimp.exe' file then, holding down the 'ALT' key on the keyboard, drag this onto the desktop. This will create a shortcut for easier access. You'll be asked if you want to replace the original shortcut – choose 'Yes'.



4 Run The GIMP

The first time you run The GIMP, you'll be asked some questions. The first relates to the memory cache size, and can be left at default. The second asks you to create a 'Personal GIMP Directory'. Do this by clicking on 'Continue'.



5 The GIMP interface

After all of this, you are ready to start using The GIMP. Notice that the interface is split into a separate window for each section of the program. This allows you to easily find different properties for the image you're currently working on.

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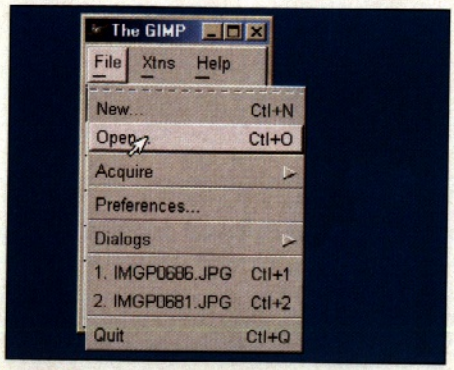
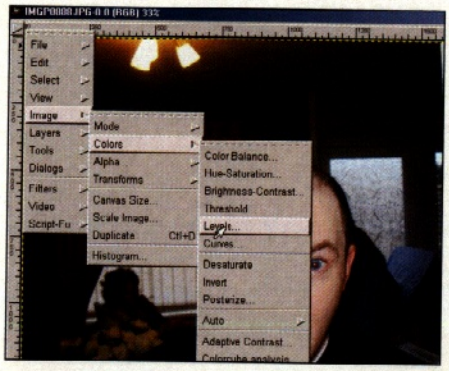


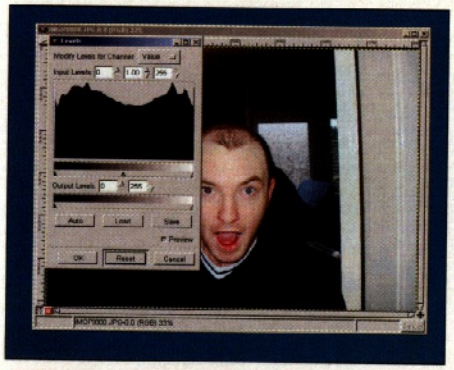
6 Open an image

An image manipulation program is nothing without an image to manipulate, so let's open a picture. Click on the box entitled 'The GIMP' and choose 'File' from the main menu, then click on 'Open'. Alternatively, you can press 'CTRL' + 'O'.



7 Changing levels

With our picture open, let's start changing its appearance. Click on the arrow in the top-left of the image window, then select 'Image', 'Colors', 'Levels'. This brings up the Levels box, which is a good starting place for some image manipulation.

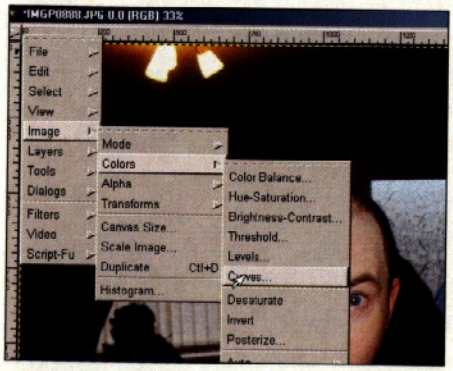


8 The histogram

The Histogram Graph gives a visual representation of the image's colours, from black to white in the colour spectrum. An ideal histogram contains an even match of colours, like our graph. Changing the histogram is easy, though.

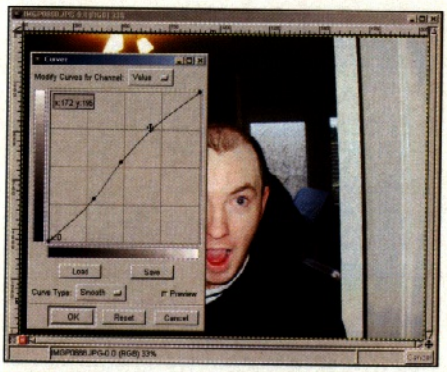
9 Altering levels

Adjusting the top slider alters the brightness. This defines the points at which the black and white values should be set, so moving the slider to the black area brightens the image. Move the slider until you're happy with your image.



10 Curves

Like all the best image manipulation programs, The GIMP contains a section devoted to altering the 'curves' of your picture. To access this section, click on 'OK' in the Levels window, then choose 'Image', 'Colors' and 'Curves'.



11 Adjust the curves

The curves window is actually one of the most powerful sections of The GIMP, and allows for more detailed control of your image. Place a point on the curve by clicking on it, then drag it out of position to alter the shape of the curve.

Keyboard shortcuts

WANT TO GET even more from The GIMP? Get to grips with these keyboard shortcuts, which will have you whizzing around the program quicker than ever.

- CTRL + W
  Close current image
- CTRL + N
  Open new image
- CTRL + S
  Save the current image
- CTRL + C
  Copy
- CTRL + V
  Paste
- CTRL + X
  Cut
- =
  Zoom in
- –
  Zoom out

Jargon buster

Filter
A graphical style you can apply to an image to change the way it looks. These are usually arranged to give you an artistic look, or simply a style you couldn't achieve manually. A filter is actually a collection of different layers and styles applied on top of each other to create a single style.

Effect
Similar to a filter, this is another name for applying styles to an image. The only difference in the two is the way each is defined by the program in question. Apart from that, the two terms are interchangeable.

Plug-in
This is any third party function, which you can import into a program to give it added functionality. The term comes quite simply from the fact that you 'plug in' the function in question to the program.

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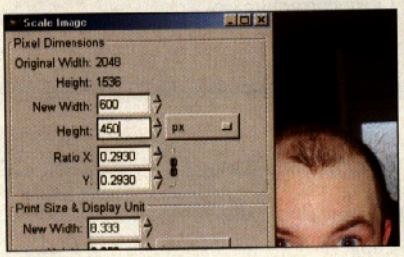
How to...

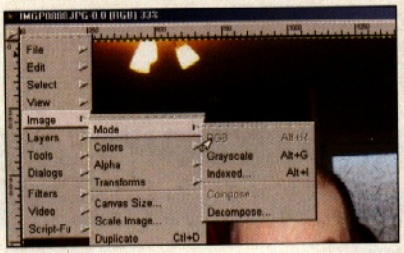
Save for the Web

ALTHOUGH IT HAS no specific options for saving an image for the Web, there are plenty of tweaks and functions within The GIMP to ensure that your pictures are optimised for use online. Follow our three simple steps to Web picture nirvana.



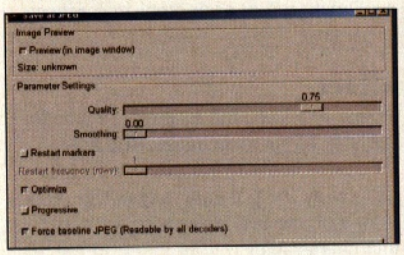
Scale it down

The first step to a slimmer, more Web-friendly image is to scale the image down in size. Choose 'Image' from the picture menu, then pick the 'Scale image' setting. It's recommended you give your image dimensions of less than 600 pixels in the larger of the two settings – the other value will adjust accordingly.



The right mode

It's worth making sure at this point that you're working in the correct colour mode. Basically, you should ensure that you're working in RGB mode, or else you won't be able to save as a JPEG. Check this by going to 'Image' then 'Mode'.

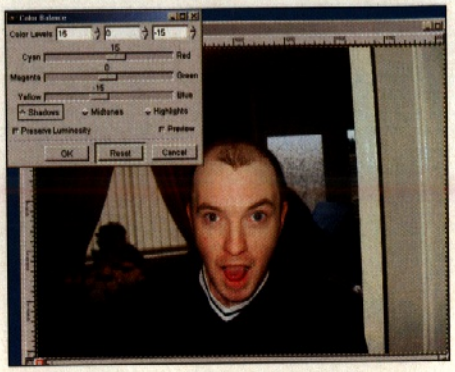


Save as a JPEG

Next, go to 'File' and choose 'Save as'. Choose JPEG from the list, and give your file a name. Pressing 'OK' brings up the above screen, where you can adjust the settings of your JPEG. The top slider, where you choose the quality of your image, is the most important here.

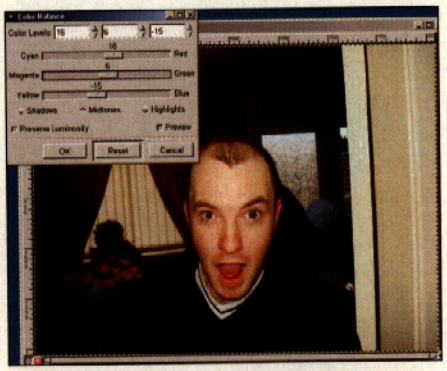
12 Color Balance

Color Balance can lead to some highly unrealistic colour effects. If you use it sparingly, though, you can garner some impressive tweaks. Access the Color Balance window by choosing the 'Color balance' option from the menu in step 10.



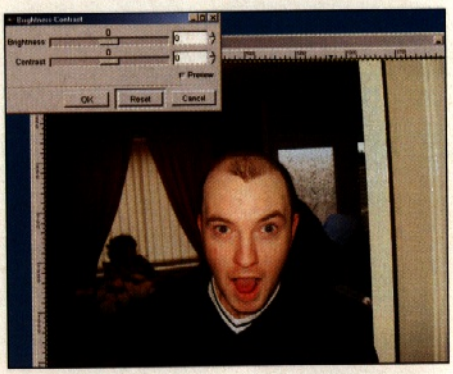
13 Warmer colours

Some careful adjustment of the top and bottom sliders has provided us with better skin tones. The key here is to make small changes – moving the slider 50% one way or the other will only leave you with an unrealistic image.



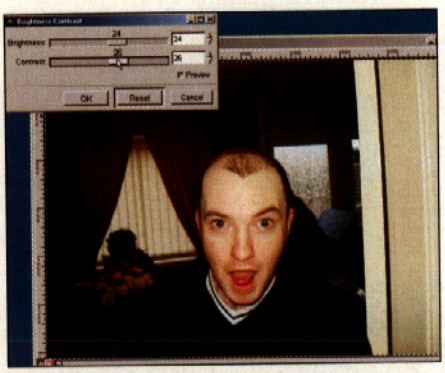
14 Midtones and highlights

By the same token, clicking on the 'midtones' and 'highlights' buttons below the sliders will allow you to alter each of these settings. Understandably, changing the 'midtones' setting can have the largest differences to your picture.



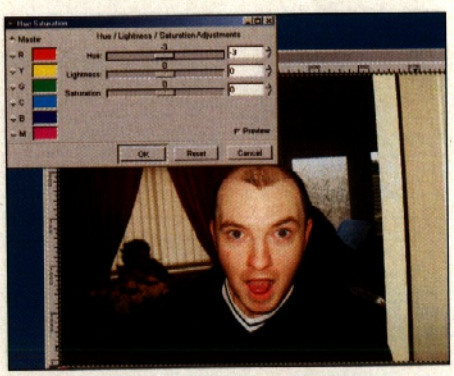
15 Brightness and contrast

The most significant changes you can make to your image involve the brightness and contrast. The GIMP allows you to easily correct any lighting mistakes – just choose 'Brightness/contrast' from the 'Image' menu.



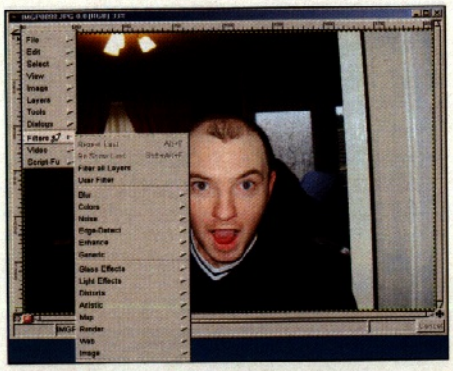
16 The altered image

Careful manoeuvring of the brightness and contrast values can provide you with impressive results. Although it's tempting to concentrate entirely on the brightness slider, altering the contrast can be more effective.



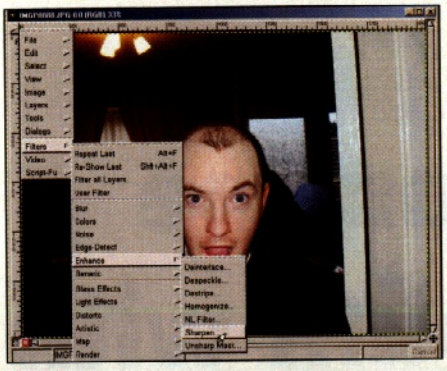
17 Hue and saturation

This setting allows you to change the whole colour spectrum represented in the picture, and should be treated with the utmost care. As before, purple photos don't impress anyone, so go easy with the hue and saturation tools.



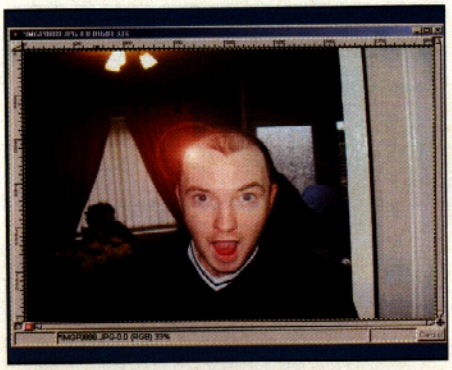
18 Effects and plug-ins

The GIMP boasts a range of filters to jazz up your images. In the main image window, click the arrow to the top-left, then choose 'Filters' from the drop down menu. Here are a few of the filters you can apply to your image.



19 The sharpen tool

Correcting a slightly blurred image is easy. Rather than fiddling around with complicated tools and options, the quick and effective route is to apply a sharpen filter to the picture. You can find this under 'Enhance' in the Filters menu.



20 Lighting effects

One way of boosting even the most mundane of pictures is to play around with lighting effects. Each of these, found under 'Light effects', gives the impression of an additional light in the picture. We've created a simple lens flare.

21 Distortion

No image program is complete without a series of distortion tools. Found under the 'Distort section, you can find all manner of filters to change the appearance of your image. In our example, we've gone for the slightly zany 'curve bend'.

22 Artistic effects

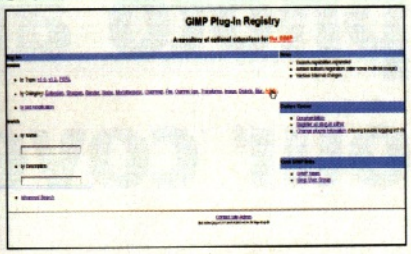
You can probably get the best effects by using the artistic filters. Although the range isn't as substantial as you'd find in full versions of Photoshop, there's enough to be getting on with. The above shot shows the 'cubism' effect.

23 The Gee-Zoom

Okay, so this is hardly the most useful tool in the world, but it's a fun diversion from the job of correcting your pictures. Found under the 'Toys' menu, the Gee-Zoom tool allows you to create attractive kaleidoscope effects in real time.

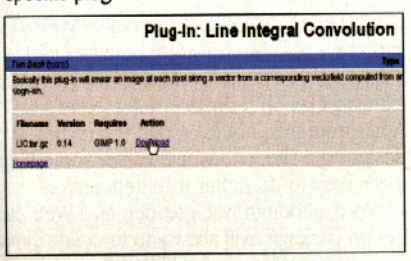
New plug-ins

PICKING UP NEW filters and plug-ins for The GIMP is a relatively easy way of enhancing the features of the program. They allow you to use more individual effects on your images, and turns The GIMP into an even more fully-featured graphics package.



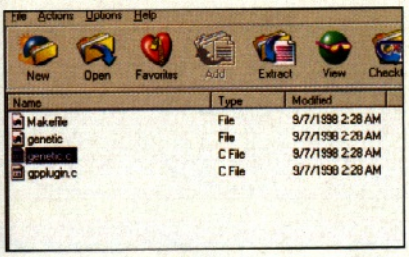
Visit the site

To get your hands on more GIMP plug-ins than you'll ever need, visit the page dedicated to this purpose. Point your browser to **http://registry.gimp.org/index.jsp**, where you can see a list of the plug-in categories. Just click on any one of these to see the specific plug-ins.



Download the plug-in

Click on any item in the list that appears, which will take you straight to a download page. Click on the download link on this page to save the plug-in to your hard drive. The file is in Zip format, so you'll have to unzip it to access the plug-in.



Into the folder

Now, open The GIMP program folder and then go into the 'plug-ins' folder that's stored here. All you have to do is copy the unzipped plug-in from the downloaded file into The GIMP plug-ins folder, and you'll be able to use the new filter the next time you open the program.

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In brief:

Task: Share your photos online
Software I need: Word, Xara WebStyle
Difficulty: Beginner/Intermediate
Time I need: 2 Hours

ON THE CD

Build an online photo album with our cover CD

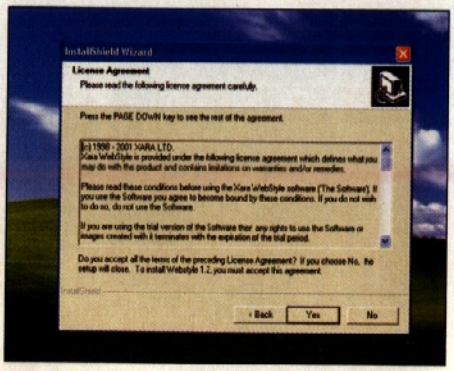
WANT TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS WITH OTHERS? IT'S EASY WITH XARA WEBSTYLE AND MICROSOFT WORD

IF YOU'RE PRODUCING a personal Web site, it can seem pointless to waste time including flashy extras. People won't expect a multimedia extravaganza on a site about someone's cat. Apart from this, not everyone is a natural at designing a site, and would prefer something that's easy to do rather than impressive.

Word, although not intended as a Web page design package, will allow you to create simple Web pages. When you add WebStyle 1.2, Word will allows you to create some extremely pleasing designs. Word does not see WebStyle as a plug-in application, so you can save your WebStyle files and import them into Word.

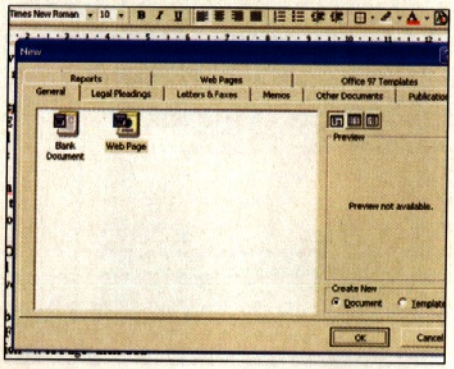
For this project, we'll be using these two programs to produce a page of an online photograph album. The images in this case are taken from the Hemera PhotoObjects collection, but so long as you only import JPEG (and GIF) images, Word will create a perfect Web page.

Once you've completed your Web page design, you can save it directly as an HTML file. After that, you're just a few short steps away from sharing your photographs online.



1 Launch the applications

Install Xara WebStyle from this month's CD, and save it to an appropriate location on your hard drive. Run the program and, when prompted, choose if you wish to register. Run Microsoft Word in the usual fashion from your Start menu.



2 Open Word's Web template

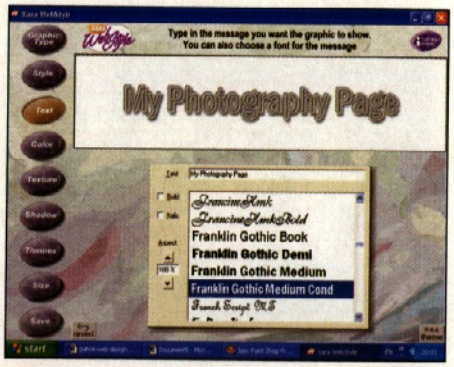
Along the bottom of your screen is the taskbar. Click on the 'Word' icon, then within Word, click 'File'. Follow across the 'New' option and click on 'More Word Templates'. In the window that appears, click 'Web Page' then 'OK'.

3 Create your site heading

Return to WebStyle. You should find the program is still at the opening menu, with choices of 'Headings', '3D Headings', 'Backgrounds', 'Buttons', 'Bullets' and 'Dividers'. For the moment, click on either 'Heading's or '3D Headings'.

4 Choose a heading style

WebStyle will offer a variety of styles you can choose to base your heading upon. Click one, or click on 'More Designs', to specify which style you wish your heading to adopt. Each variable affecting this style can be altered.



5 Alter the font

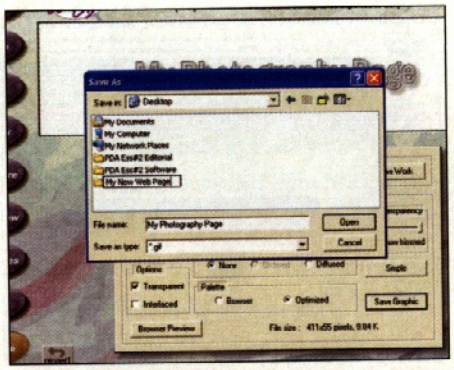
Click on the 'Text' button. Within the window that appears, choose a font that suits the nature of the Web site being designed, and choose Bold/Italic if appropriate. In the text field, enter the text to appear at the head of your page.

6 Alter the shadow

Click on the 'Shadow' button. Nine default states are available. If you wish, click on the 'Advanced' button and experiment with all the different values. The preview window will update to show the effect.

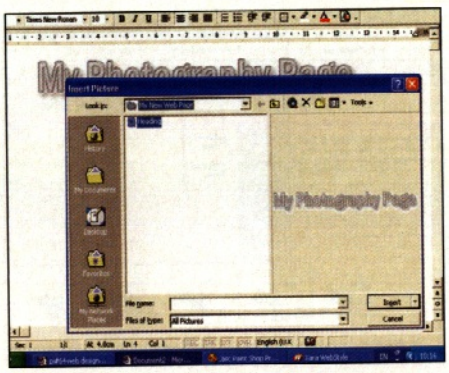
7 Create a big heading

Click on the 'Size' button, and using the slider, specify the size of your heading will be within the Web page. The preview window may take a minute to update. This allows the program to ensure that the image remains anti-aliased.



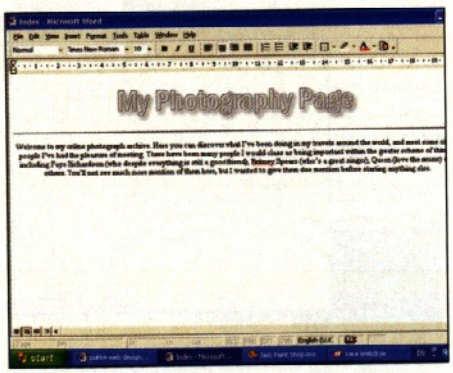
8 Save your heading

Click on the 'Save' button. If you wish to use the styles chosen so far, click 'Save Work' and follow the prompts given, otherwise click 'Save Graphic'. Create a new folder to store your images and then provide a filename.



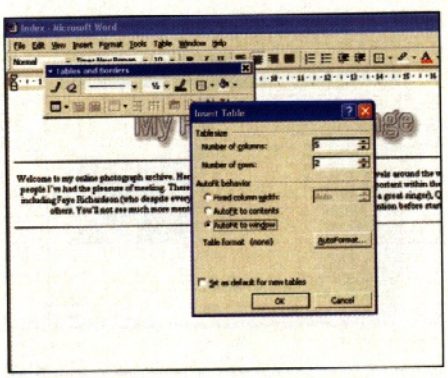
9 Import the heading

Return to Word. Place the cursor where you wish your heading to be and select 'Insert', 'Picture', 'From File'. Using the Windows interface, navigate your way to where you just saved the file and click 'OK' to import it.



10 Add some basic text

Within Word, divide your page up as you see fit; and start to import the text you intend to open this Web page with. Different versions of Word offer different Web options, so some things may change once the page is exported.



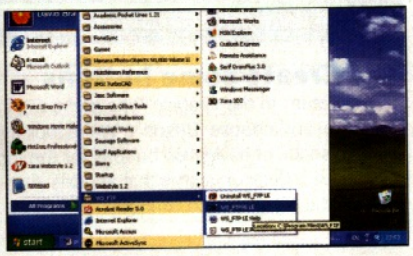
11 Create a table

To keep things simple, we're using a table as the basis for this Web site. Click 'Table', then follow across 'Insert' and click 'Table' again. Select how many rows and columns you require, ensure 'Autofit to Window' is highlighted then click 'OK'.

How to...

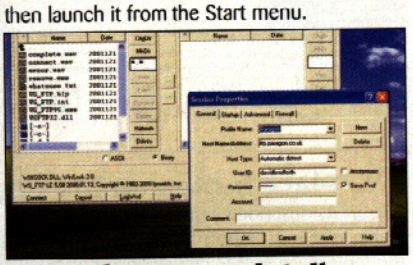
Upload to the Web

ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED putting together your Web site, the next step is to upload it. Before you do this, you'll need to make sure you've got some available Web space. Most ISPs provide a certain amount of free space when you sign up, but if in doubt, please see our ISP Guide on page 146.



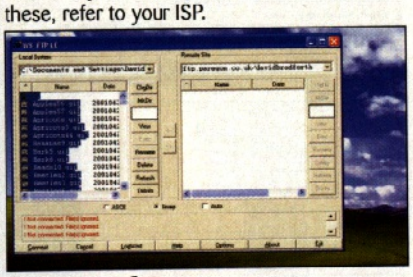
FTP software

In order to upload your site, you can either take advantage of the Web Publishing Wizard built into Windows or use an FTP package. WS_FTP (featured on the cover disc in trial form) is one such package, allowing you to treat the machine hosting your Web pages as a local hard disk. Install it from the cover disc, then launch it from the Start menu.



Enter the server details

Connect to your ISP in the usual fashion. If your ISP is AOL, run through the connection then minimise the application. Within the Session Properties window, enter the FTP details of your Web space. If you don't know these, refer to your ISP.



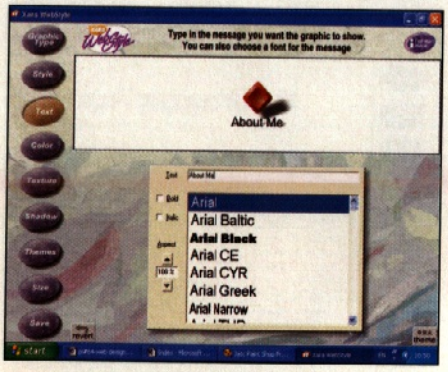
Drag and Drop

Locate the directory containing your Web page. WS_FTP uses a UNIX-alike approach, and as such you'll need to enter the exact path, but through experimentation this should be easy to find. When you have this open, select all of the files within it, and drag them to the 'Remote Site' window. Your Web site will be uploaded for all to see!

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

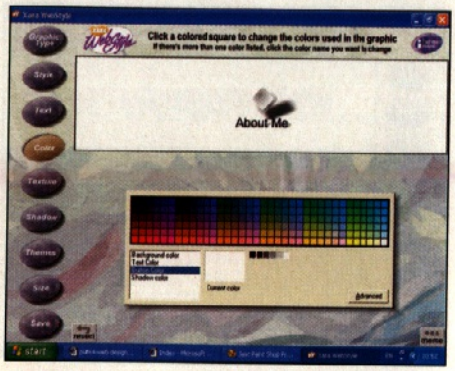
12 Create some buttons

Return to the Graphic Type menu within WebStyle, and choose 'Button's. We're looking to create a series of navigation buttons for the foot of a Web page. Click on a style that appeals, then click on the 'Text' icon to continue.



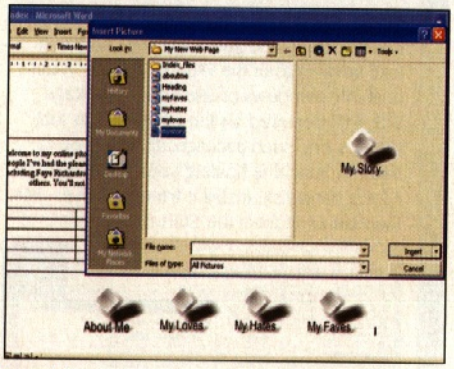
13 Alter the button text

Select a bold text style, and enter the text you require for this button. Try to keep it fairly short, as this ensures other buttons built in the same style are able to sit next to each other within a Web page. If necessary, reduce the aspect ratio.



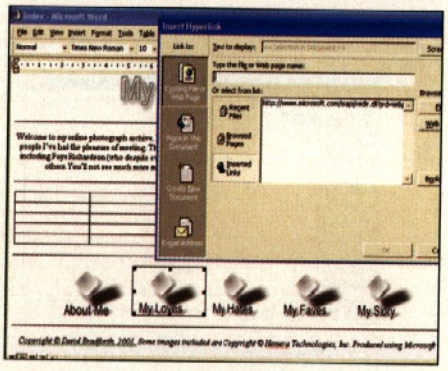
14 Change the button colour

Click on the 'Color' button. This window lets you change the colour of any attribute – the background, the text, the button or the shadow. Click on 'Button', and choose a pastel colour for the button.



15 Place button on the page

As described earlier, save your button within WebStyle. Return to Word, and underneath the table place a dividing line. Insert a space after this line, and insert your button. Repeat steps 12 to 14 until you have all you need.

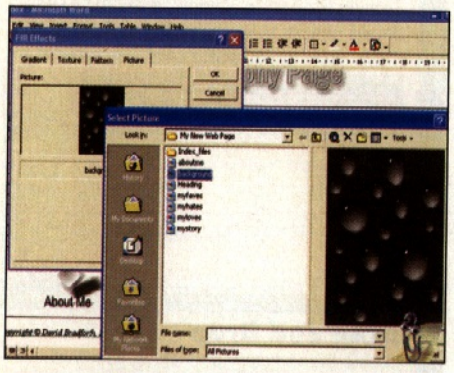


16 Link your button

Click the first button. Click 'Insert', 'Hyperlink' and provide the name of the HTML file to link to. If you've created other pages on your computer, copy them into the same folder as this beforehand. This will make uploading easier.

17 Background graphic

Return to WebStyle's Graphic Type menu. Click 'Backgrounds' and choose a background style. As before, click on 'Color' if you wish to alter the shading applies to components of the background. Save it when happy.

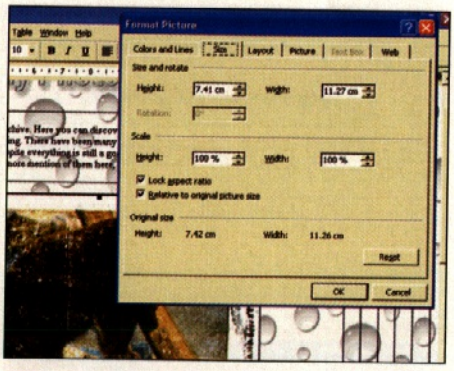


18 Add a background

Within Word, click 'Format', then the arrow at the bottom. Follow across 'Background' and click 'Fill Effects'. Click 'Picture', 'Select Picture' then locate the backdrop on your hard disk. If necessary, you can alter the image and repeat the process.

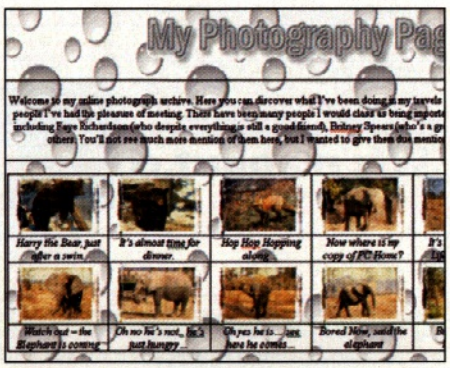
19 Import your photograph

Click within the first field of the table. Choose 'Insert', 'Picture' then click 'From File'. Locate the first image on your hard disk, and double click to import it. Try to ensure that it's in JPEG format.



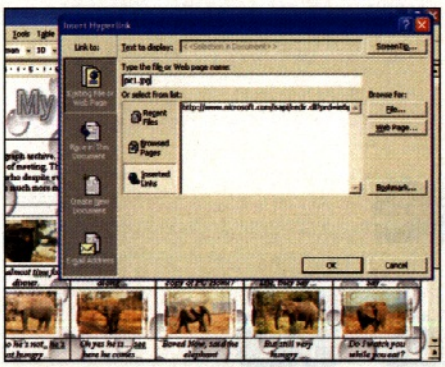
20 Scale your image

If you find that the photograph is too big for the available space, click once on the image, then choose 'Format', 'Picture'. Click on the 'Size' tab and alter the scale to make things fit. Highlight the table and choose 'Distribute Columns Evenly'.



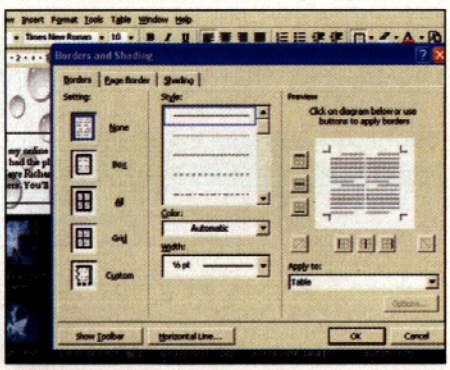
21 Add a description

In the field directly underneath the photograph, enter a description of no more than two lines. This enables you to quantify what's in the photograph, but will not affect the overall layout of the Web page. Style the text as you wish.



22 Add hyperlinks

It's possible you'll want to allow visitors to view the entire photograph. That's easy enough to do. First ensure your images are in JPEG format, and follow the procedure described earlier for linking to a Web page.

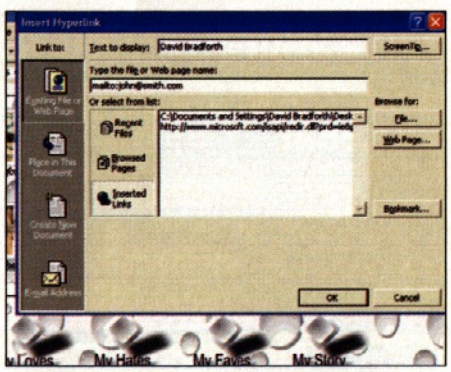


23 Stylise your table

Now we're close to completion, it's likely you'll want to lose the black lines from the table. To do this, first highlight your table. Click 'Format', 'Borders and Shading' then click on 'None'. Click 'OK' to confirm and the border disappears.

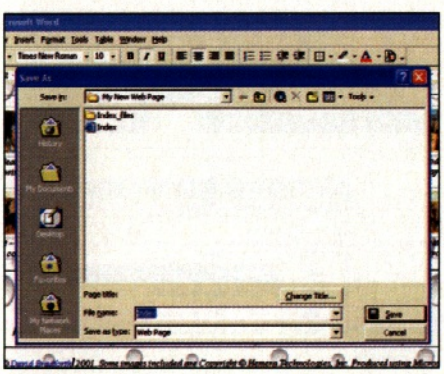
24 Place your photographs

If you find one row of photographs too close to the next, click inside one of your caption fields. At the end of the caption, press 'Return' a couple of times. This will space out the table, and as a result, space out your photographic collection.



25 Add acknowledgments

If you've not done so already, insert a line after your table. Underneath that, place any acknowledgments you need to make. If you'd like people to email you, insert a hyperlink on your name in the form 'mailto:john@smith.com'.

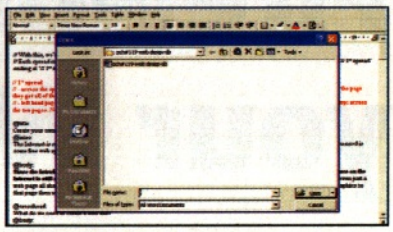


26 Save your Web page

With your Web page complete click 'File', 'Save as Web Page' and choose where to place it. As we've imported a series of images, place it into the same folder. Click 'OK' and the file will be saved, along with copies of all incorporated images.

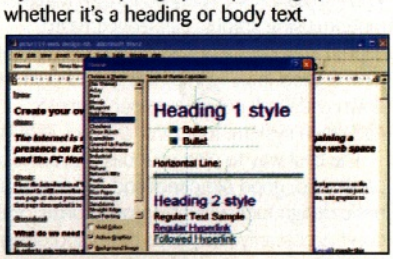
Easy method: Web page themes

ALL RECENT VERSIONS of Word have been supplied with a new formatting tool – Themes. This lets you adopt a particular style for your Web page designs, allowing for absolute consistency in the text being used, the presentation and so on.



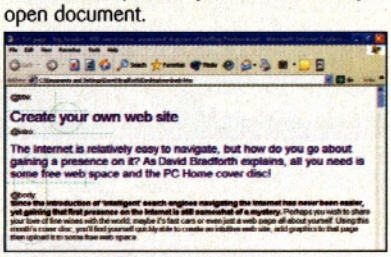
Open a document

Once you've decided to place a document onto the Internet, you need to open it. Click 'File', 'Open' and locate the file on your hard disk. Once it's open, click 'View', and 'Web Layout' to gain an idea of what the document will look like as a Web page. Check through the document, applying a style to each paragraph depending upon whether it's a heading or body text.



Choose a theme

Click on the 'Format' menu, and choose 'Theme'. Work down the list on offer, keeping an eye on the preview window until you find a style you like. Click 'OK', and Word will adopt that style for the currently open document.



Preview the page

Save the document as a Web page. You'll find that a graphics directory is created, containing the background image. Close Word, and double click on this HTML file. Internet Explorer – or your favourite Web browser – will now launch, and you can check how the final product looks.

In brief:

Task: Design a home page
Software I need: Macromedia Fireworks 4
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 8 to 10 hours

Add some Fireworks to your Web site!

USE THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF FIREWORKS 4 TO CREATE A COMPLETE AND COMPELLING DESIGN FOR YOUR WEB SITE

WEB SITES CAN'T really be thrown together at random using graphic elements created haphazardly over a period of time. If you want to have a good-looking Web site, you should sit down and work out your colour scheme, navigation system, fonts and graphics in advance.

The best way to plan your basic layout is on paper. Yep, good old pencil and paper are still the basic design tools used by professionals. You don't necessarily have to sit down and design everything on paper to the nth degree, but a good general outline on paper is a must.

One general rule that's used in print design that translates well to Web site design is this: only use two different fonts on any page. This stops the page becoming confused – if you use six or seven fonts on a Web page it just looks terrible. You can probably get away with three fonts but that's the absolute maximum.

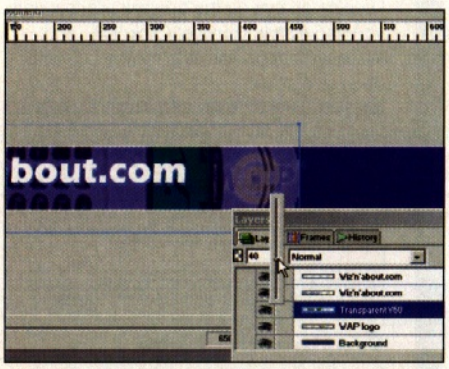
Over the next eight pages we're going to show you how you can use Macromedia Fireworks 4 as the tool to build a WAP Web site called Wiz'n'about.com from scratch. This includes graphics, navigation and layout.

1 Create a site logo

We're using three fonts for Wiz'n'about: Eras Bold ITC for main graphic headings; Trebuchet MS for small graphics text and Arial for HTML text. Use the Text tool in Fireworks 4 to create your logo text and choose the colour.

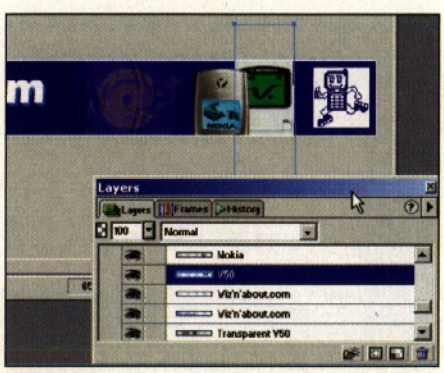
2 Position the text

The Web site logo banner is 650x70 pixels. This is a good size because most PCs are set to a minimum of 800x600 pixels so it won't be too big. Make sure you always use rulers and guides for creating graphics.



3 Add a background graphic

We've added a second layer of text below and slightly offset from the original logo using a paler blue. We've imported a graphic, positioned it beneath the text layers and used the transparency tool for a nice background effect.

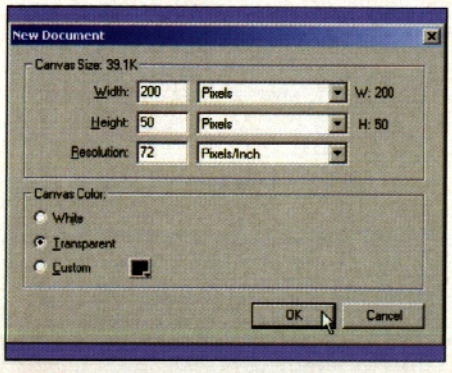


4 More graphic elements

We've now added a few more imported graphics, a W@P logo and a couple of mobile phone images. We've also used a small bitmap image of the 'mobile guy' graphic used by the WAP company. Position extra elements as you wish.

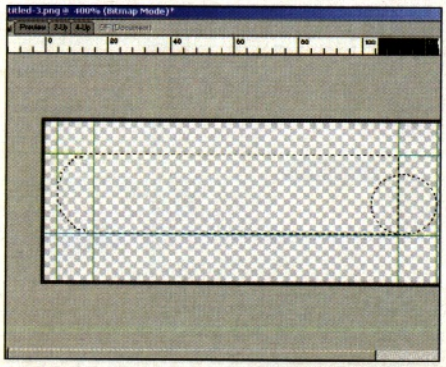
5 The final touches

Adding a tag line is a good idea, just use the Text tool as before. We've also added some small arrows made up from single pixel white dots and positioned them at random and added a white border around the whole image. Save as a PNG file.



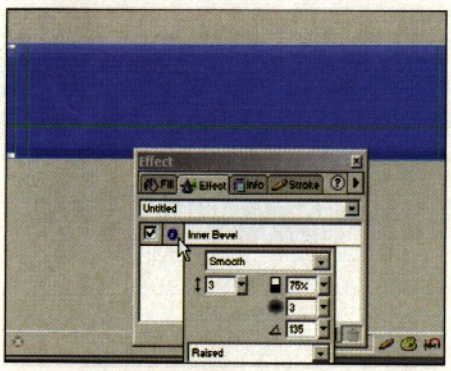
6 Create a basic nav button

To create a basic navigation button, go to the 'File' menu and select the 'New' command. When the new document window opens, select a width and height larger than your final button size. Select a transparent background, too.



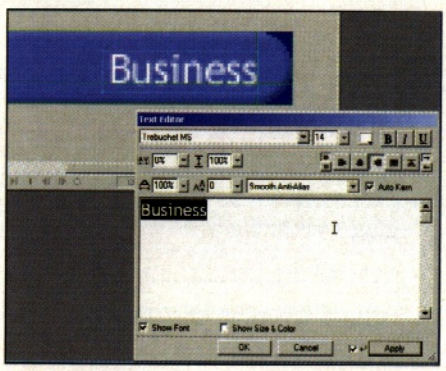
7 Create the button shape

Decide on your button dimensions and create guides by dragging them from the rulers at the edge of the window. Using the Marquee tool, define the rectangular section. Switch to Oval Marquee and drag out the curved ends while holding down the shift key.



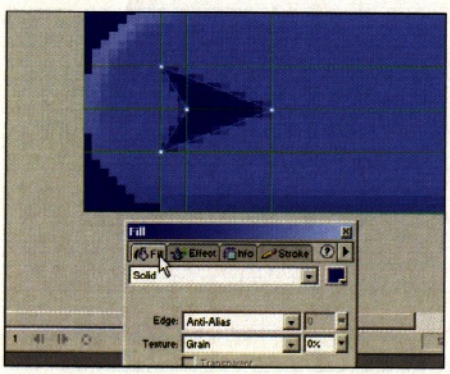
8 Fill and shape the button

Use the Fill tool to fill the button with the button colour. Now use the crop tool to chop the image down to 120x25 pixels. Select the image layer and use the 'Inner Bevel' command in the Effect panel to add a 2 pixel smooth bevel.



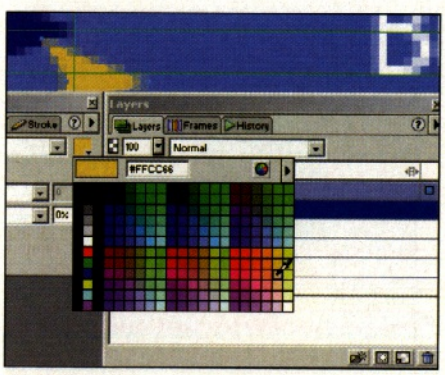
9 Add button text

We've now added right aligned text to the button. The text has been lined up against a vertical and horizontal guide. We've also added the background colour of the Web site on a layer below the button.



10 Create a rollover graphic

Use the guides to create the points for an arrow then select the 'Pen' tool. Select the 'Fill' panel and select a 'Solid fill'. Now select the fill colour, We've used the page background colour for the arrow. Create the arrow using the Pen tool.

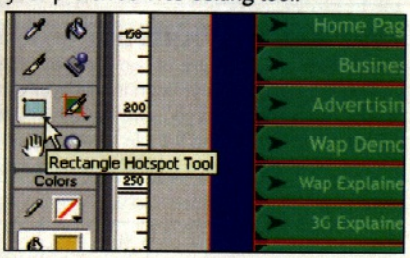


11 Duplicate the arrow

To make an exact duplicate of the first arrow, drag its path layer to the Create New Bitmap icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Use the colour selector in the Fill panel to select a different colour for the second arrow.

Site navigation

BECAUSE FIREWORKS ENABLES you to create hotspots on any image and then add behaviours such as Web links and email links, you can use an image and hotspots to create a sophisticated Web site navigation image map. You could create the image map as a standalone image and then use the code generated by Fireworks in your preferred Web editing tool.

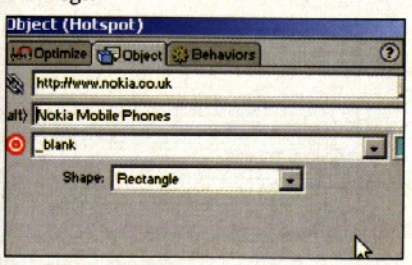


Choose your tool

Choose the 'Hotspot' tool from the main Fireworks 4 toolbar. The Rectangular Hotspot Tool is the default option: if you click on it in the toolbar you can choose the 'Circle Hotspot Tool' or the Polygon Hotspot Tool from a pop-up menu.

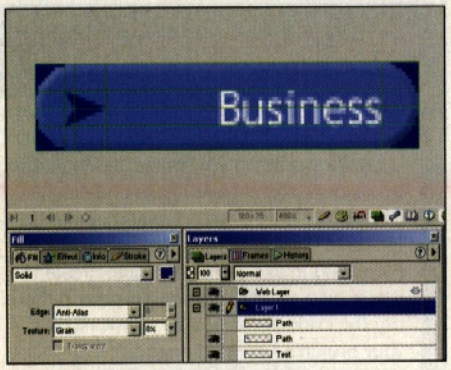
Create the hotspot

Whichever hotspot tool you happen to choose, you can create precisely positioned hotspots on your image by using the zoom function of Fireworks at 200% or 400%. This enables pixel-perfect placing of the hotspot on the image.



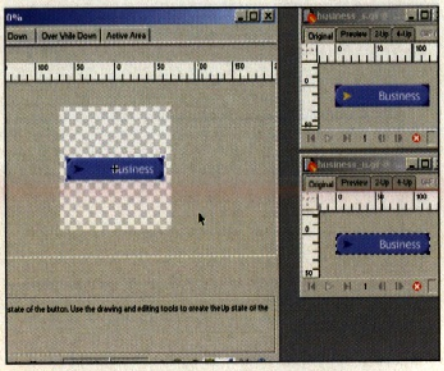
Add the link

Using the Object panel you can add the link to the hotspot including ALT tag data and target information if required. You can add as many hotspots as you like to an image – as long as they all fit – and create superb image maps for site navigation.



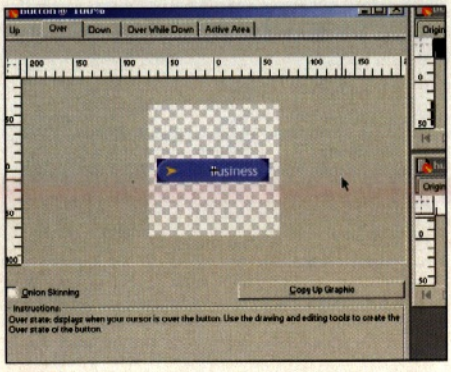
12 Save the buttons

Now you must export two versions of the same button. Use the 'eye' icon in the layer panel to hide one arrow while you save the other. Use the 'Export' command in the File menu and save the images as business_u.gif and business_s.gif.



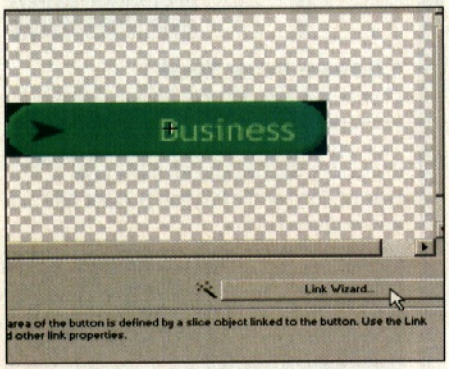
13 Create the rollover

Using the 'New' command, create a new 120x25 image. Go to 'Open' and open the two buttons you have just saved. Go to the 'Insert', 'New Button'. Cut and paste the unselected version of your button into the Up window of the button.



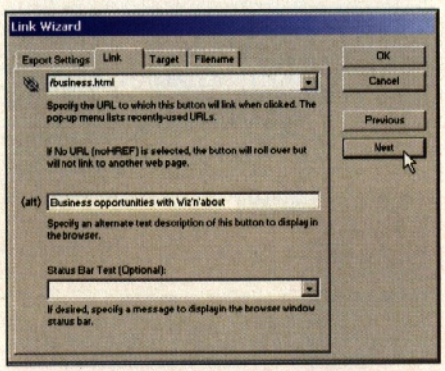
14 Add the 'over' graphic

Select the 'Over' tab in the Button panel and cut and paste the selected (gold arrow) version of the button into the window. Flick back and forth between the two button states to make sure they line up correctly. Use the arrow keys to make adjustments.



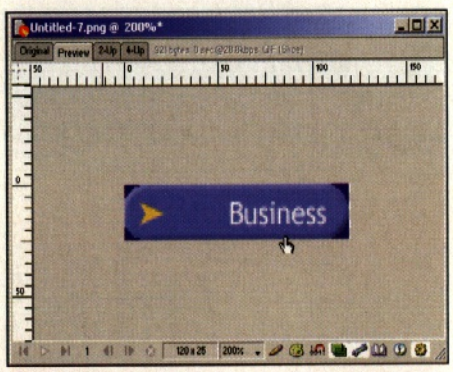
15 Define the active area

Now we have to define the URL that the button links to. You should have worked out how many Web pages you need and their names in the planning stage. Click on the 'Link Wizard' button to continue.



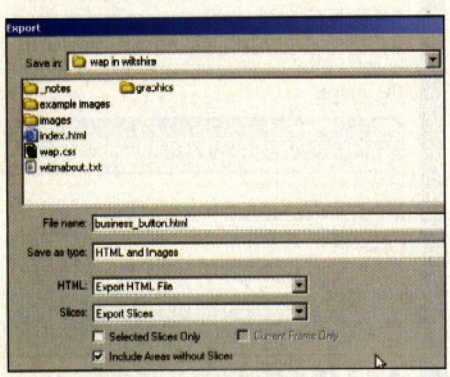
16 Entering URL settings

The Link Wizard has several options. Export Settings lets you choose between GIFs and JPEGs; the Link tab is where you enter the URL; Target is useful for frame-based sites and Filename controls the file settings on export. Click 'OK' when finished.



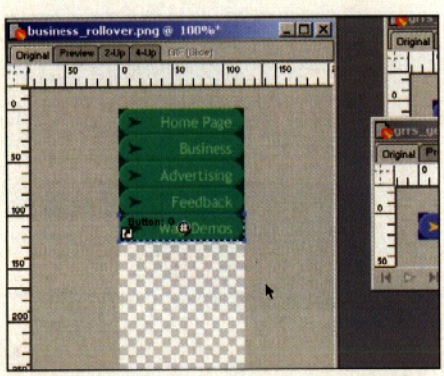
17 Test the button

Now to see if the button works. The button appears in the image where you used the 'New Button' command. Click the 'Preview' tab and you can see the button image. Move the mouse over the image and it should change to the rollover state.



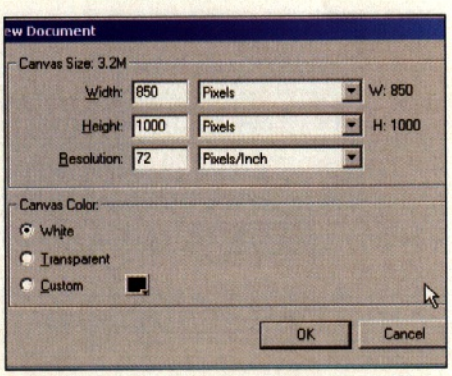
18 Export the button

If you are satisfied, go to the 'File' menu and select 'Export'. When the file selector appears you have several options. Choose a file name for the button and save as HTML and Images. You can also specify a sub-directory for the images. Click 'Save'.



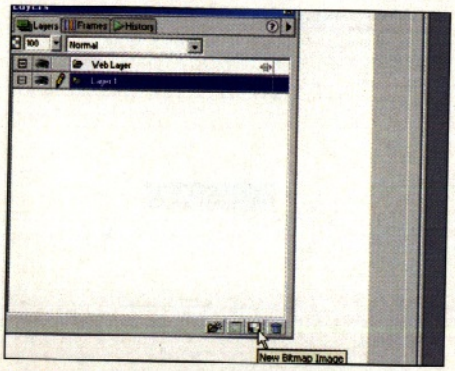
19 Multiple buttons

You can create multiple buttons in the same image – in this case it's 120x250 to accommodate ten 120x25 pixel buttons. The advantage of this is that when you export the image it generates images and HTML for all the buttons at the same time.



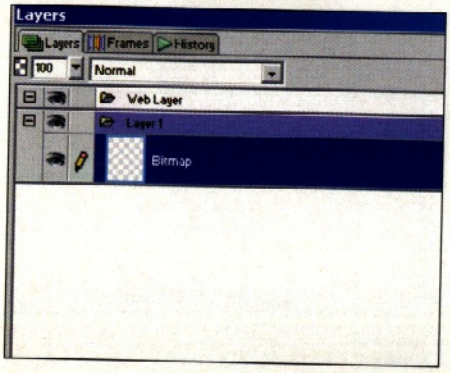
20 Design a full page

Now to lay out the full home page. It's a good idea to think about the size of the page. Most PCs these days use at least 800x600 resolution. Use the 'New' command and create a document 850 pixels wide and 1000 pixels high.



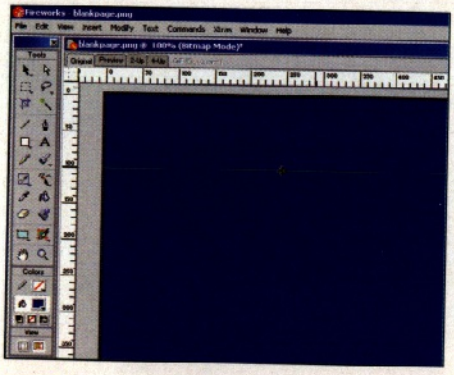
21 The background bitmap

You can't apply a background colour until you have created a bitmap image within the first layer. Go to the 'Layers' panel and select 'Layer 1' in the list. Now go to the bottom-right of the window and click on the 'New Bitmap Image' icon.



22 Colour the background

A new sub-layer will appear beneath the Layer 1 folder icon in the Layers panel. A new transparent bitmap image has been created the same size as the new document. Fill the bitmap with the page background colour using the 'Fill' tool.

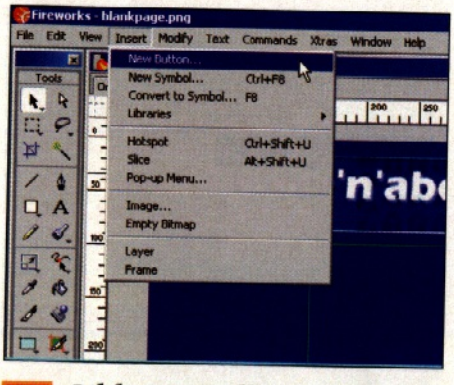


23 Using guides

Go to the 'View' menu and select the 'Rulers' command and create some guides. You can switch to the Pointer Tool and drag a guide from the edge of the Ruler. Position your guides so you can use them to lay out the page design.

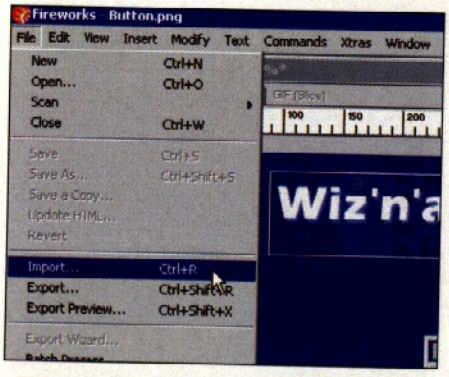
24 Add the main graphic

Add the main Web site page header graphic created earlier. Open the image and then drag and drop it onto your new Web page layout. It's always best to design your page components separately like this.



25 Add your rollover buttons

To save the whole front page as a single HTML file, you have to create your navigation rollover buttons in the new image. Go to 'Insert' and select 'New Button'. Create your rollover buttons in exactly the same way as you did before.

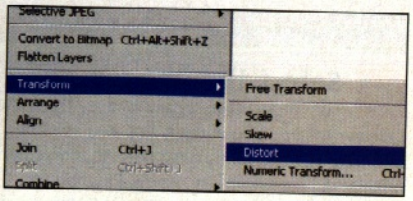


26 Import the button images

You have already created your rollover button images and exported them as GIF images. You can now use these images in your main Web page design. To insert a button image directly into the Button panel go to the 'File' and select 'Import'.

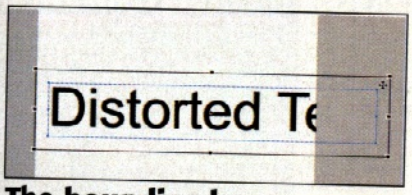
Transformations

IT'S POSSIBLE TO create many different creative effects in Fireworks 4. One of the basics is the Transform command that enables you to manipulate images in various ways. Here's a simple way to combine a Transform with a basic effect with excellent results.



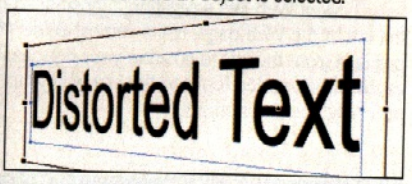
Choose your transformation

Use the Text tool to create a simple two word line of text using a point size of 96. Select the text object on the page with the Pointer Tool and go to the 'Modify' menu and select 'Transform', then 'Distort'.



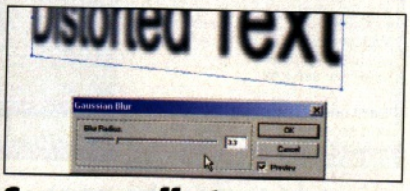
The bounding box

A black bounding box appears around the text with eight anchor points that can be moved. This is a separate bounding box from the standard blue box that shows an object is selected.



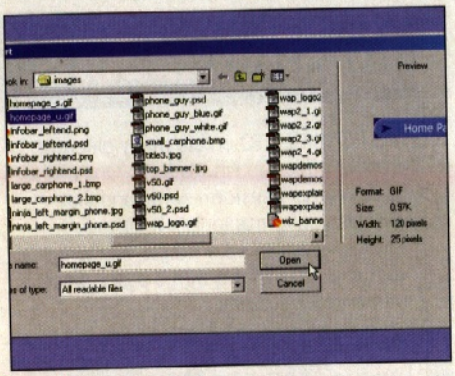
Distort that text

You can experiment with the text by dragging the various anchor points around the page. We've opted to move the top-right and bottom-right points in towards the centre and moved them up and down respectively to give a perspective effect.



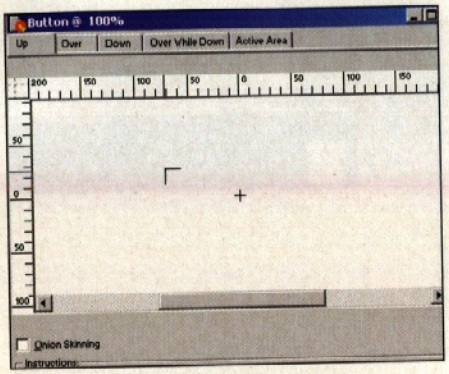
Cause an effect

Select the 'Pointer' tool in the main menu and then go to the 'Effects' panel. In the pop-up menu, select 'Blur', 'Gaussian Blur. You'll end up with a good-looking piece of blurred perspective text.



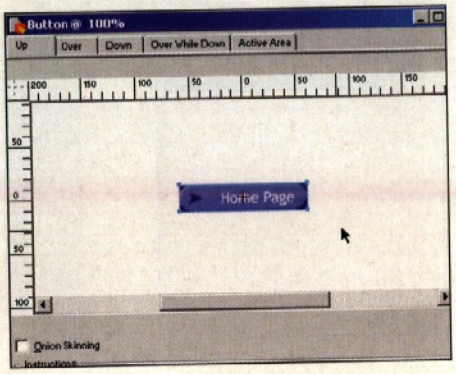
27 Select the images

The Import tool is easy to use. The Import file selector appears and lets you browse for button image. Scroll through the list and select the unselected version of the Home Page button created earlier. Click on the 'Open' button.



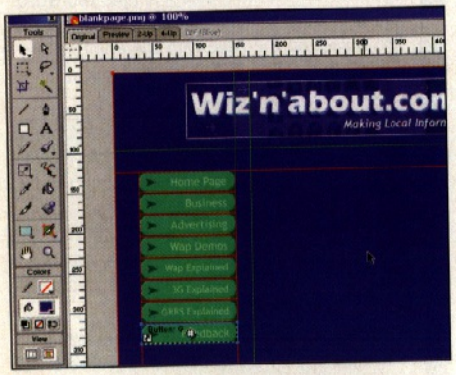
28 Where's the button?

You'll now return to the Button panel, but where's your imported GIF image? Don't panic, your mouse cursor has been replaced with an inverted L shape that denotes the top-right corner of the GIF held in your PC's clipboard memory.



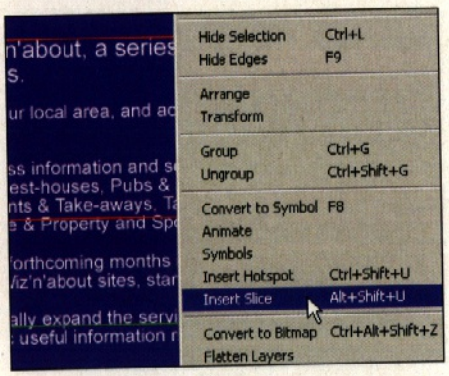
29 Position the button

Position the inverted L in the position where you want the top-right of the button to be then left click to paste it into the Button panel. Now import the selected version of the button in the Over section and add URL links as earlier.



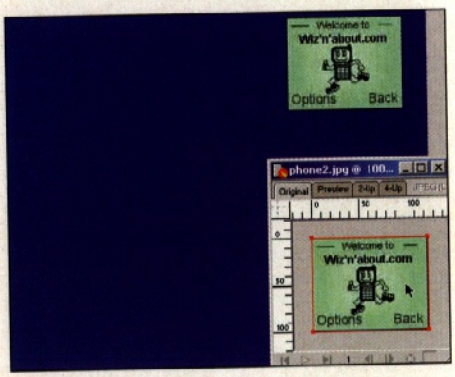
30 Add the other buttons

Most Web site navigation is positioned on the left of the Web page; use a vertical guide 150 pixels in from the left to position your buttons. You can use the Pointer Tool and the arrow keys to precisely position buttons.



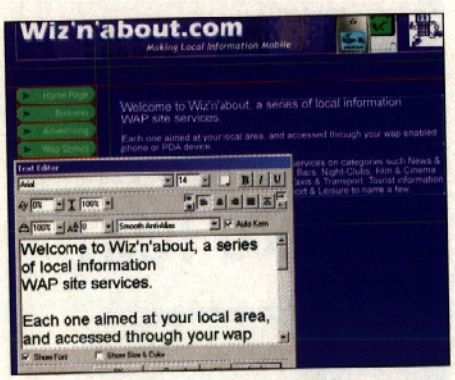
31 Slice the logo

Because the Web page is going to be loaded as a set of separate images, you should create slices for the main areas. Use the Pointer Tool to select the main logo image and then right click with the mouse. Now select 'Insert Slice'.



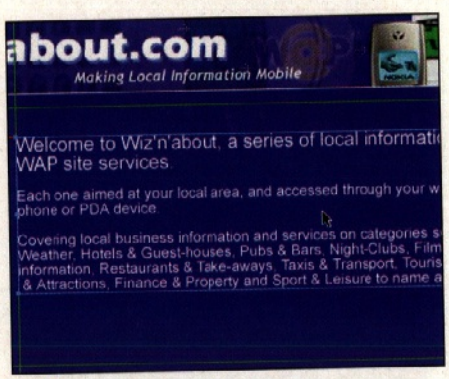
32 Add more images

Prepare any extra page furniture separately and place them on your layout by using the Import command or by opening each image individually and dragging them onto the main page. Use the method you find most efficient.



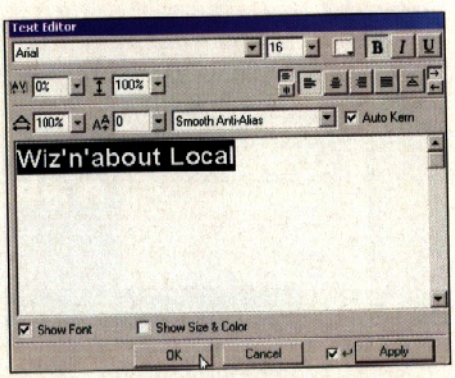
33 Add text to the page

Now onto the text for your page. It's best to do this in a word processor to avoid any spelling or grammar errors. When you have your text ready, select the 'Text' tool in the main tool bar. Cut and paste your text into the Text Editor panel.



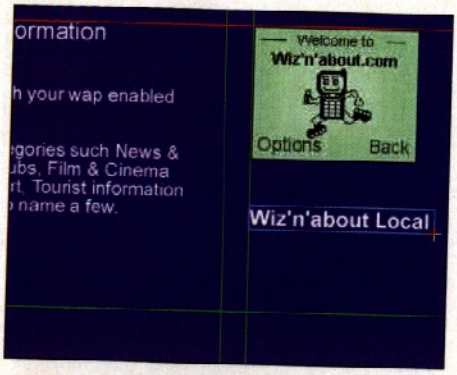
34 Format your text

You can use the Text Editor panel to choose the font and size of your text and also use it to create different sizes, styles and colours of text within the same text window. Position the text box on your page layout.



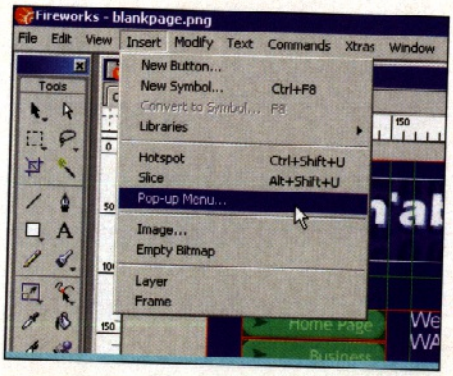
35 More navigation links

If you have areas of the site you haven't linked to with rollover buttons, or if you want to add an alternative navigation system, add a pop-up menu to the page. Use the Text tool to create a text object that acts as the link to the pop-up menu.



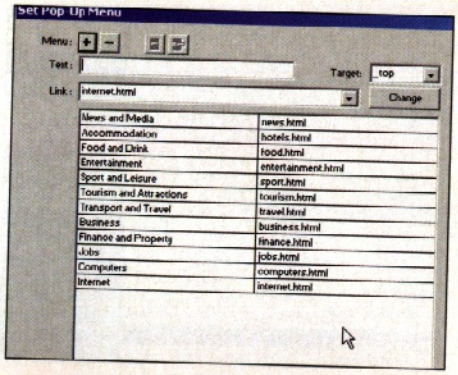
36 Create a slice

Pop-up menus in Fireworks 4 require a hotspot or a slice to be defined. Go to the main toolbox and select 'Slice'. Now click in the top-right corner of the text you have created and drag out the slice to include the complete area of text.



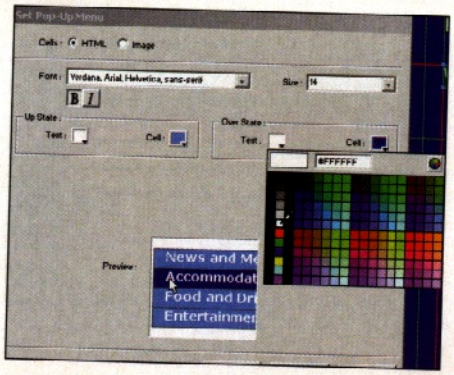
37 Start the menu

Alternatively, you can right-click on the text object and use the 'Insert Slice' command. Once the slice has been defined, click on it so it is selected and then go to the 'Insert' menu. In the Insert menu, select the 'Pop-up' menu command.



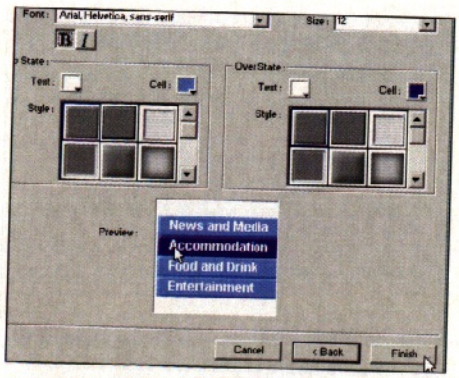
38 Fill in your links

In the first page of the Set Pop-Up Menu panel, enter the links to the pages listed in your pop-up menu. Type the text part of the link in the Text field and the URL in the Link field then click the '+' button.



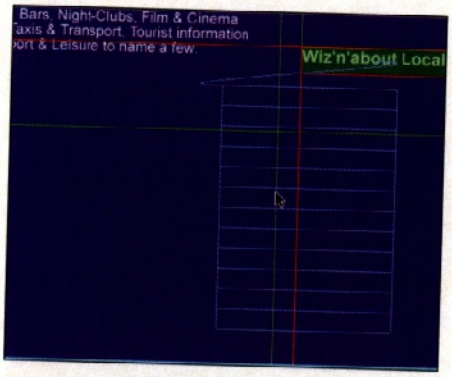
39 Colours and styles

The next page is for setting the colours and style. Select the appropriate colours for the text and background colours for both the Up and Over states using the colour swatches panel. You can also set font size and style.



40 Images or HTML?

When creating the pop-up menu you have a choice between a plain HTML menu or an image version that creates GIF rollover buttons for you menu. There are lots of styles and options you can choose from. Click 'Finish' when ready.



41 Position the menu

When you get back to your main image you will see a ghost outline of the pop-up menu linked to the slice that acts as the trigger for the menu by a curvy line. Wherever you position this outline is where the actual menu will appear on the Web page.

Jargon buster

Behaviors

Fireworks enables you to easily create interactive elements using behavior commands (spelt in the US fashion). Behaviors can be simple rollover commands that changes the way a button looks when you roll the mouse pointer over it. As you move onto more complex behaviors, you are able to change images in a different part of the page or create pop-up menus.

Objects

Each element you add to a Fireworks image – whether it's a bitmap image, text object or vector graphic object – will be stored as a separate object within the main image. Each object can be individually stretched, distorted, moved or deleted if you feel like it. There's no limit to the number of objects you can add to an image.

Vector Containers

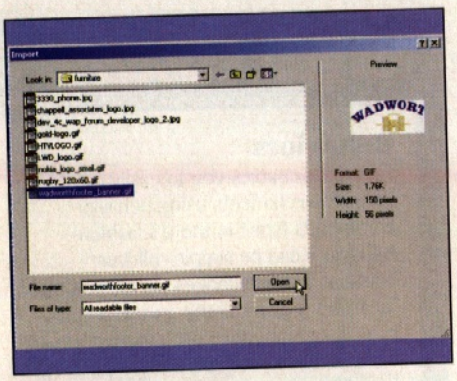
Fireworks' big strength lies in the fact that it uses vector containers to hold image data. This means that any type of content you may use on a page (vector graphic, bitmap or text) can be manipulated as if it were a vector image. This handy features means that Fireworks is much more versatile than a bitmap only graphics program.

Strokes

It's possible for you to change the appearance of an object in Fireworks by applying a stroke to the edge of a path. You could stroke a path with a line of any thickness and any colour, so you can use the pen tool to create a path and the stroke will automatically be painted on to the page. Textures and effects can be applied to strokes.

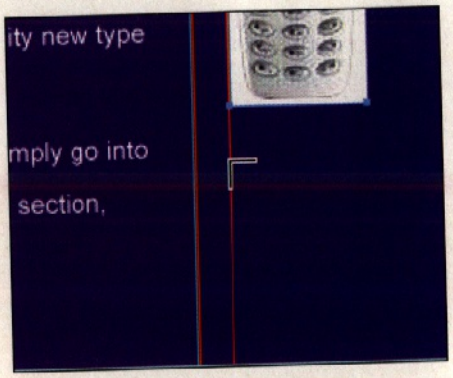
Fills

Fills in Fireworks are similar to strokes. You can predefine a fill in the Fill panel with a wood texture and a colour of your choice. Use the pen tool to create a complex shape such as a seven-pointed star and the fill automatically takes place when you complete the shape by closing the path.



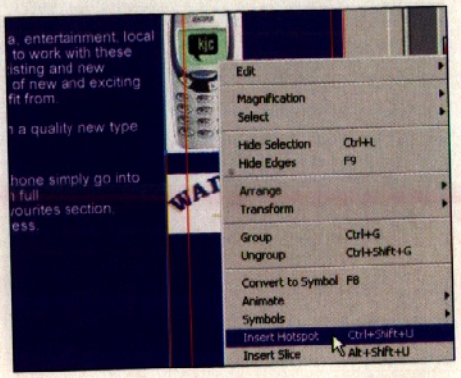
42 Add the final touches

If you're adding more content to your page such as images, email links and so on, you'll have to import any pictures from your PC's hard drive. Go to the 'File' menu and select 'Import'. When the Import file selector opens, choose the images.



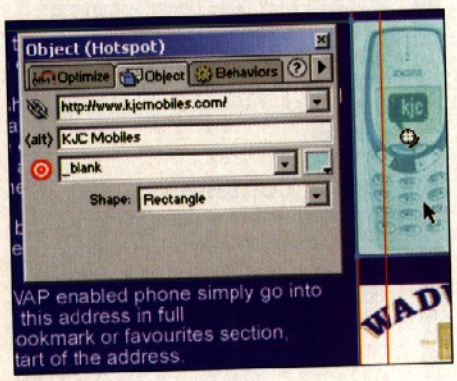
43 Position the images

When the Import file selector closes, the image you have chosen remain invisible until you place it on the page using the inverted L. Place your image using the guides on the page and resize if necessary. Repeat for all of your images.



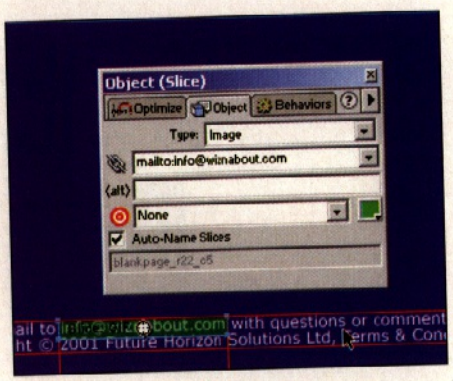
44 Linking images

If any images are links to the external sites, you can add Web links to them. Use the same method to create links within your site. Select an image, right-click on the selection and then select the 'Insert Hotspot' command from the pop-up menu.



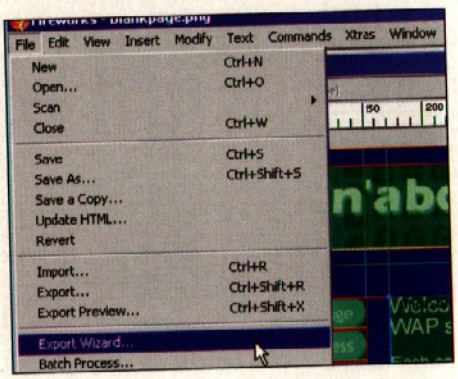
45 Add the link

The selected image will have a hotspot mask laid over it. To add the Web link, go to the 'Object' panel. In the first field add the URL of the link. In the second field enter the ALT tag text. In the final field, specify the browser window to be used by the link.



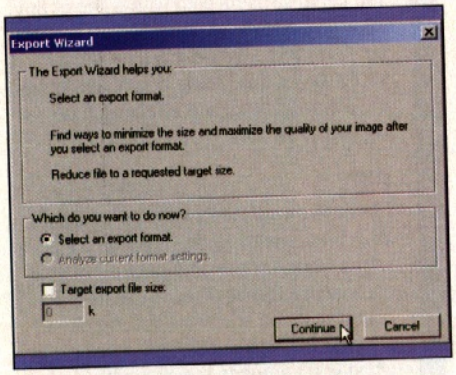
46 Add email links

You can add email or Web links to any point on the page using slices. To add an email link, use the 'Slice' tool to draw a rectangular slice around the email address within the text. Now use the Object panel to insert a mailto: link in the URL field.



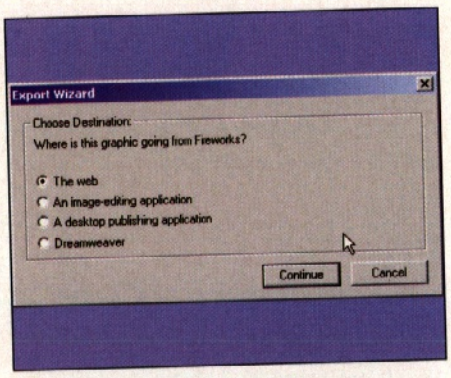
47 Export your project

Once everything is in position and you are satisfied that all of the links, rollover buttons and pop-up menus are correct, export the project. Go to the 'File' menu and select the 'Export Wizard' to use a step-by-step export sequence.



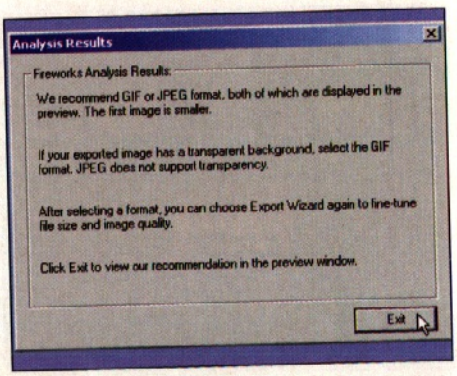
48 Specify the file size

Although you probably won't always use the Export Wizard, it's useful to see exactly how it works. In the first page, you can specify a target file size. Use this if you want to restrict the final size of the page to speed up downloads.



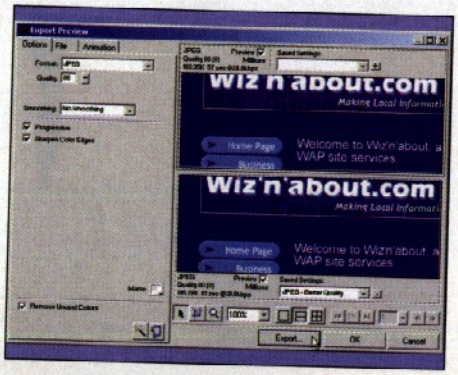
49 Choose the destination

You can choose how the project is exported, so you can save it for use within Dreamweaver, export it for use in another graphics application, export for use in desktop publisher or directly for the Web. Click the 'Continue' button.



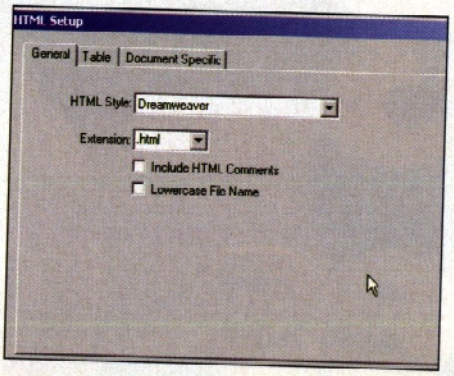
50 Analyse this

Fireworks 4 now generates a recommended output format for the Web, offering a choice between GIF and JPEG formats. Although GIF format offers smaller file sizes, you should choose JPEG format if you have photographic images.



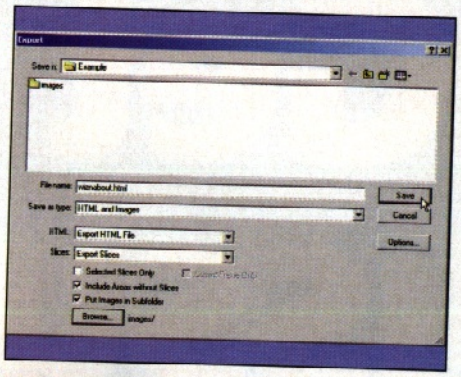
51 Choose file type

The next page is the Export Preview panel. You can usually compress to about 30% image quality with JPEG images without losing too much definition. You should also choose 'Progressive image' download, too. Click the 'Export' button.



52 HTML setup

In the Export file selector you should click the 'Options' button before you do anything else. This takes you to the HTML Setup panel where you can choose the HTML style and the file extension. The accepted standard is .html. Click 'OK' to exit.



53 Final export

You should choose 'HTML and Images' as the export type, then 'Export HTML File', 'Export Slices', 'Include Areas without Slices' and 'Put Images in Subfolder'. Browse for the images folder, choose a file name and location and save. Job done.

The finished article...

Rollover buttons
Although rollover buttons may seem a little passé these days, visitors to Web sites love to see some kind of interaction on Web pages even if it's just a button changing colour.

Body text
To be honest, creating text as images is a serious waste of bandwidth. If you leave the text content out of the Fireworks project you can add it as HTML text in a Web editor later.

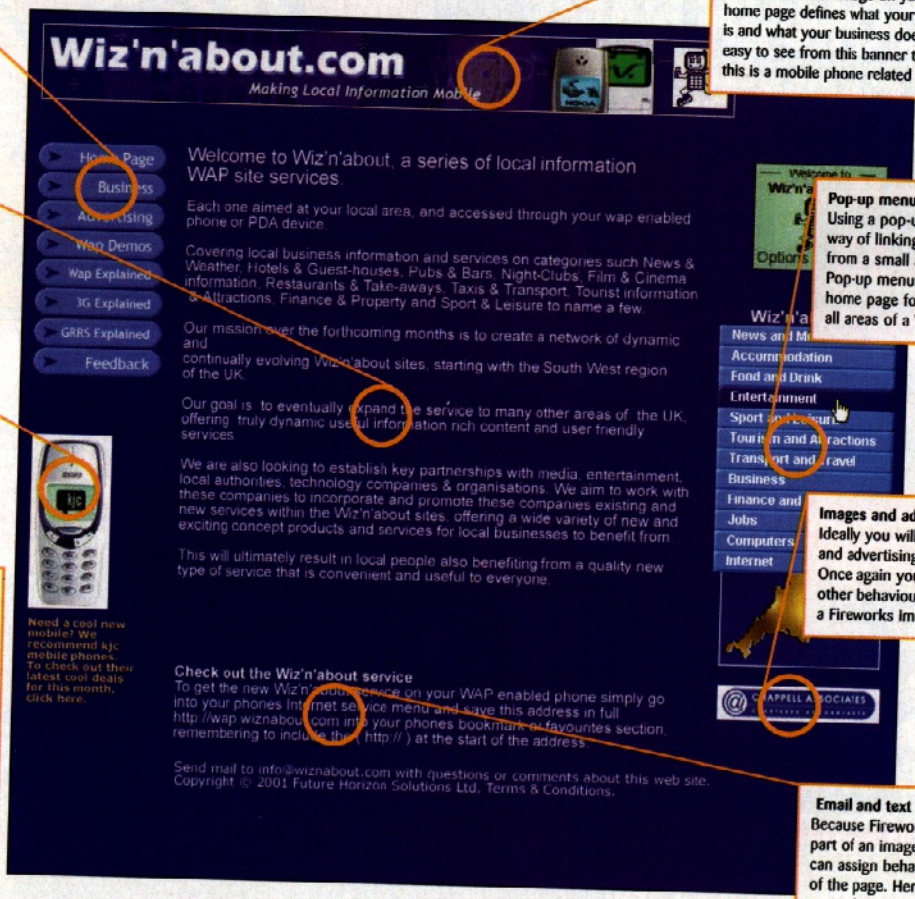
Hotspots
You can use images as hotspots to link to other Web sites or to specific areas within your own site. Fireworks can embed the URL directly into the Web page for you.

The main banner image
The main banner image on your home page defines what your site is and what your business does. It's easy to see from this banner that this is a mobile phone related site.

Pop-up menu
Using a pop-up menu is a great way of linking to a lot of content from a small area on a Web page. Pop-up menus can be useful on a home page for instant access to all areas of a Web site.

Images and adverts
Ideally you will have sponsorship and advertising on your Web site. Once again you can add links and other behaviours to any object in a Fireworks image.

Email and text links
Because Fireworks can treat any part of an image as an object you can assign behaviours to any part of the page. Here as slice was created over the email address and a mailto: tag added.



The finished home page

Everything covered in the tutorial can be seen in the final Web page created by Fireworks 4 and displayed in a Web browser. You may want to add other features such as a Web search box or other functions to your page. You can do so because the code generated by Fireworks can be edited in FrontPage, Dreamweaver or Adobe GoLive – you just have to select your preferred format when exporting the project.

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Q&A

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Keeping business away from pleasure

WORK FROM HOME? MAKE SURE YOUR PC GAMES DON'T JEOPARDISE YOUR WORK FILES

Q I'm just about to start working from home and I will be using my PC for business software and data. The problem is I don't want to give up my gaming activities but I'm wary of having games and business files on the same PC in case they affect my business records and data.

I can't really afford a second PC at the moment because I'm buying Office XP Professional, so what's the best solution? I have a 750MHz PIII machine with a 4Gb hard drive and 64Mb of memory running Windows ME.

Andy O'Connell

A **You're right to be wary of having games and important files installed on the same PC, some games have a nasty habit of replacing system files with 'newer' versions that are often older than the files already running as part of the operating system. Your best solution is to upgrade your PC and add a separate operating system to run your business software. You will be given a choice of which operating system to load when you boot up your PC. Your processor is more than adequate for running Office XP so there's no need to change that. What you do need to add is an extra hard drive with at least 10Gb of storage space, an extra 128Mb or 256Mb of memory and Windows XP Home or Professional. You can get a 10Gb hard drive for around £65, 128Mb DIMM memory can be found for as little as £14.95 and Windows XP Home Edition is about £140 for the full version. You should get the full version because you will technically be running two operating systems. The whole upgrade should cost you about £200 – £250 in total.**

Install the hard drive and extra memory first then install Windows XP. When installing DO NOT select the upgrade option, select the option that provides you with a clean install and select the advanced options. This enables you to specify the hard drive to install the operating system on; in this case it will be the new drive. You are also asked if you would like to format the installation hard drive using the NTFS file system, you should

Use Windows XP as a second operating system if you want to play games and run serious software on the same PC

Top tip!

Test your Net connection

PC Pitstop (www.pcpitstop.com) can help you get your PC in top form – by letting it run faster and more secure. The site runs diagnostics on your PC to identify areas that might help improve the overall performance. Best of all, it's free.

PC Pitstop can get your PC in top shape

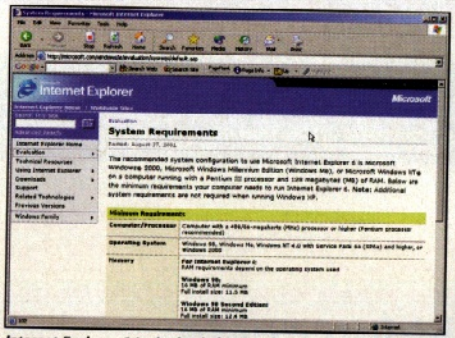
select Yes because it offers improved storage capacity and security options. Windows ME will not be able to see the new hard drive because it can't read the NTFS format, but Windows XP will be able to see both drives.

Can I run IE6?

Q I want to upgrade to Internet Explorer 6 and Outlook Express 6 from the *Practical Internet* cover CD. The problem is that I have a system that has very little free hard disk space available, I need to know what additional space will be used when installing on top of Internet Explorer 5.5.

Stephen Garner

A **The amount of disk space required to install Internet Explorer 6 and Outlook Express 6 depends on your current operating system, it varies between 8.7Mb for Windows ME to 12.7Mb for Windows NT 4. You can find full details of the system requirements for Internet Explorer 6 on the Microsoft Web site at http://microsoft.com/windows/ie/evaluation/sysreqs/default.asp.**



Internet Explorer 6 is the bee's knees when it comes to browsing the Web

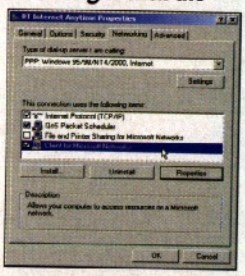
Password is a pain

Q Has anyone encountered problems with saving their password? I used to run Outlook Express 5 on Windows 98 and had no problems at all. I then upgraded to Windows 2000 Professional. Now, when I call up Outlook Express and get the dial-up connection, I type in the password and select the 'Save password' box and connect. But the next time I want to connect, the password box is blank and the 'Save password' checkbox is empty. If I go to Settings and then open Internet Properties and click the Connections tab, then enter the password in the Dial-Up settings there, it appears to remember the password and all is well until I try to make a connection. This time in the initial dial-up connection box the number of characters in the password section appears to have doubled, the 'Save password' box is ticked but the connection always fails because of an incorrect password.

I've downloaded Service Pack 2 for the operating system and it has made no difference. I've installed Outlook Express 6 from your CD and that has made no difference. I now have to have all settings blank and enter the password manually every time I want to connect, this can be 10 or 15 times a day.

David Walton

A **With Windows 2000 this usually means that there is a problem with the network settings, specifically with the Client for Microsoft Networks not being installed. You will have to verify that the network settings of Dial-Up Networking are correct. Go to the Windows 2000 desktop and double-click on the 'My Computer' icon then open the 'Dial-Up Networking' folder. Right-click the 'Dial-Up Networking' icon for your connection and select the 'Properties' command. Click on the 'Network' tab and make sure that the 'Client for Microsoft Networks' is selected. If it is not selected, click the checkbox and click**



Make sure that the Client for Microsoft Networks is installed and selected to make sure your DUN password is saved in Windows 2000 Professional

My mysterious icon hell

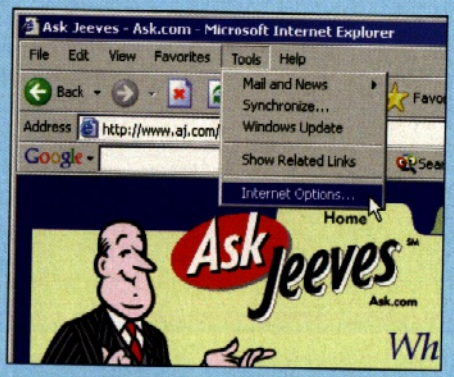
Q I keep getting little icons appear in the status bar at the bottom of the Internet Explorer 6 browser window. The icon looks like a little no entry sign. Can you tell me what it is?

Stuart Williams

A **The icon you are seeing in Internet Explorer 6 is new to the browser because Microsoft has introduced higher levels of cookie management and security into the browser. Essentially, the icon is telling you that it has refused a cookie from the Web site you are visiting. Cookies mainly keep track of your visits to sites and enable you to customise your personal settings when you visit Web sites on a regular basis. See the three steps below to adjust the cookie settings.**

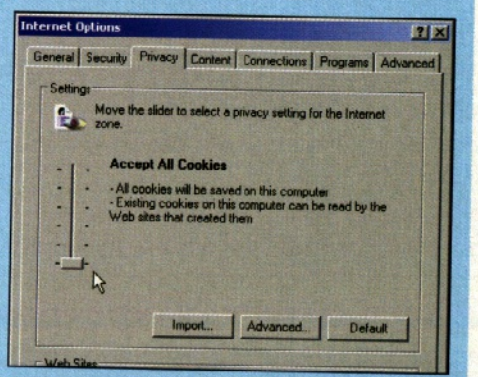
1 Privacy alert

The first time you realise there is a cookie acceptance problem is when you first encounter a site that uses cookies when using Internet Explorer 6. Even sites as generic as Ask Jeeves use cookies save your preferences.



2 Change the settings

If you do get a cookie alert or if you notice the 'no entry' icon in the status bar of Internet Explorer 6, go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'Internet Options' command.



3 Sliders

When the Internet Options control panel opens, click 'Privacy'. Now you can use the slider to change the settings to 'Accept All Cookies.' Don't worry about this setting; it was the default setting in IE5.5 and earlier. Click on 'OK' to exit.

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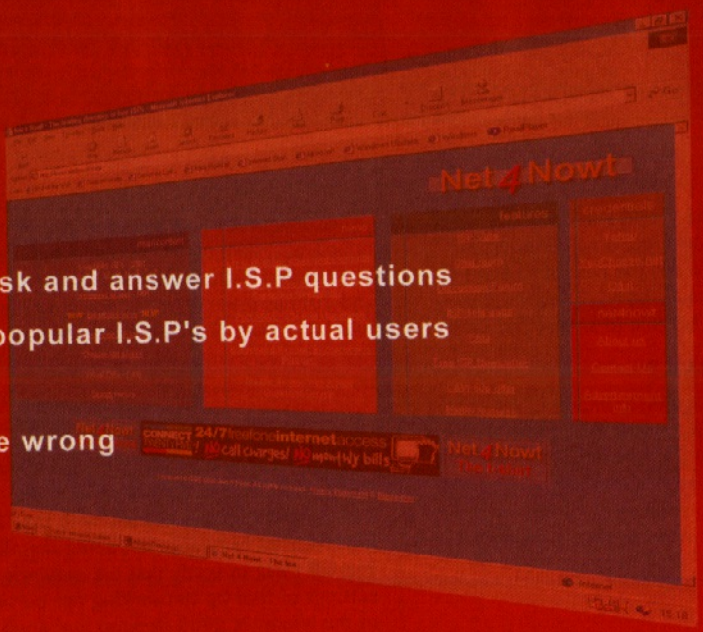

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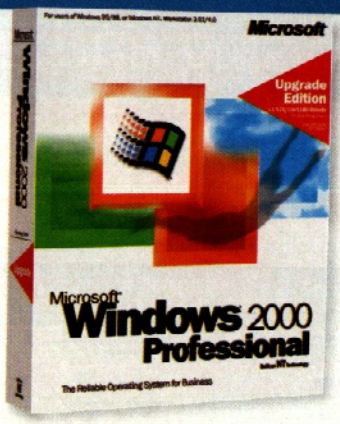


→ **on the 'OK' button to save the settings. After you reboot, Windows 2000 should now save your Dial-Up Networking password.**

In error?

Q I have just read December's *Practical Internet* and noticed an error in one of your verdicts. Someone was having email problems with the error 'Connection to the server has failed.' They are getting this because they are either withholding their phone number or they are dialling through a switchboard. Assuming they are a BT customer all they need to do is insert 1470 before their dial-up connection number and they should be fine.

Justin

A I had looked at this as a possibility Justin, but I discounted it because the author of the letter stated that he could send and receive email with Eudora using the same connection. If the problem was related to caller ID, then he would get exactly the same kind of error in Eudora as he gets in Outlook Express and be unable to send email using that connection. I stand by my original reply.

Bye, documents

Q I use Windows 2000 on my laptop and I have an annoying problem that I'm not sure how to solve. It's nothing major; my laptop isn't crashing or anything like that. It's just that I am sick of the My Documents folder being automatically selected and opened whenever I open Windows Explorer. I would prefer it if the My Computer icon were selected instead so I can get on with my work. It's rather patronising of Microsoft to make these default folders for us. Do they think we are too thick to create our own or what? Sorry about the rant, but can you get rid of my annoyance?

Steve Palmer

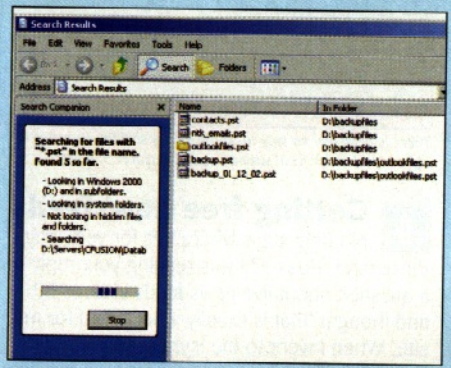
→

Outlook good for moving files

Q I've just added Windows XP to my PC and I now have two operating systems running side by side on different hard drives. I use Outlook as my email program but I don't know how to move my existing files – emails and contacts – across to the new version of Outlook installed under Windows XP. How do I move them across from Windows ME?

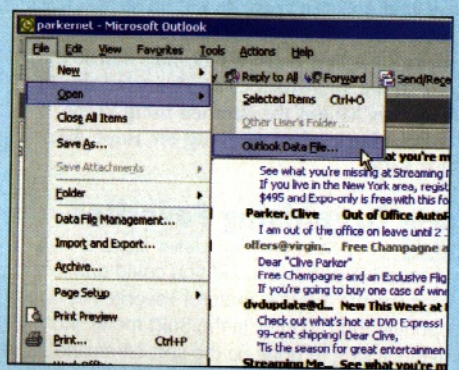
Peter O'Hagan

A Luckily Outlook is designed to be able to transfer files from one PC to another and you can use this feature to transfer email and other files between two installations of the program on the same PC. Follow the steps below to transfer your files from Windows ME to Windows XP...



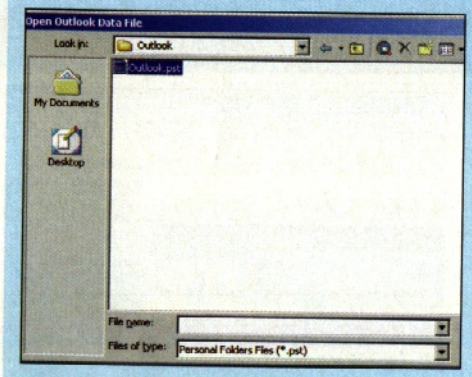
1 Find outlook.pst

First, you must find the file where they are stored. Outlook stores its data in files with the suffix .pst and the file is usually called outlook.pst. Use the search function in the Start menu to look for files called *.pst on your Windows ME drive.



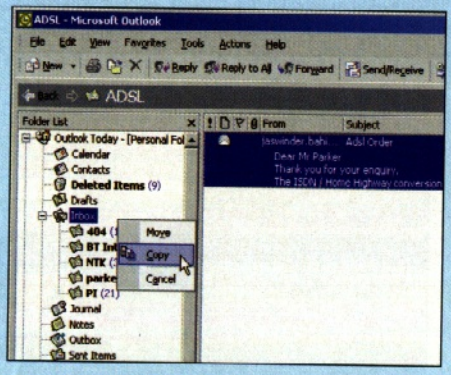
2 Open Outlook

When you locate the outlook.pst file, make a note of its location because you will have to browse for it later. Open Outlook in Windows XP and go to the 'File' menu and select 'Open', 'Outlook Data File'. You can do this in all versions.



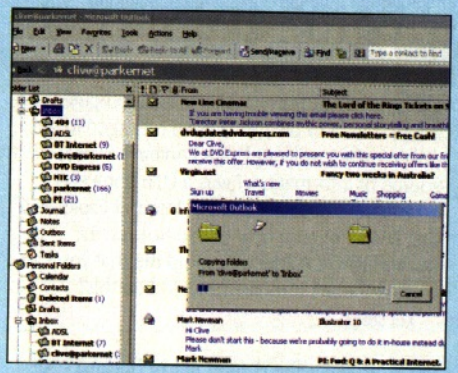
3 Select the file

You will have to browse for the outlook.pst file on your Windows ME file. If you can not find it, it probably means that it is a hidden folder. Use the Folder Options control panel and select 'Show hidden files and folders' under the View tab.



4 Copy the files

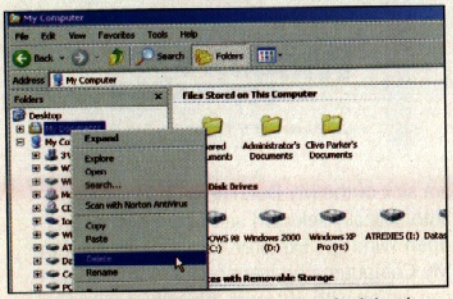
When the outlook.pst file opens you will see your old Outlook files in a folder called Personal Folders. Right-click on any folder you want to copy and drag and drop it onto the Inbox folder listed under Outlook Today and select 'Copy'.



5 Transfer in progress

The emails are now copied and stored in your Windows XP version. You can perform this kind of transfer with any data files stored in Outlook including Contacts, Notes and don't forget to copy the Sent Items folder.

Q&A
Browsing and email



In all versions of Windows before XP, using a right-click and selecting the 'Delete' command gets rid of the My Documents folder. Say farewell to your documents

A **I understand your frustration Steve and I'm happy to help. All you have to do in Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT 4 and Windows 2000 is right-click on the 'My Documents' icon in the Windows Explorer folder pane and select the 'Delete' command. You get a warning and you are told you can recreate the folder if required. Before you delete My Documents, make sure that there are no files stored in any of the sub-folders. I've also tried this in Windows XP but the damned thing keeps coming back whenever I log on. Hope that this helps.**

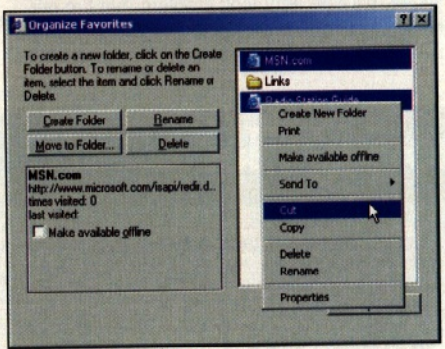
Q Organising Favorites

I noticed that in an earlier issue of *Practical Internet*, you said you could only organise the Internet Explorer Favorites by opening the Favorites in the Start menu and right-clicking to bring up the sort command. Well, I've found an option called Organize Favorites in the Favorites menu of Internet Explorer 6 that allows you to arrange them in any order you want. So you can do it in Internet Explorer.

Simon Jefferies

A **Sorry I didn't make my point clearer. Everyone knows that the Organize Favorites command exists within the Favorites menu of Internet Explorer 6 and earlier versions of the browser.**

The point is that you can only rearrange entries manually by dragging them to new positions in the list, and if you have 100 or more entries – which is not unusual – that means a hell of a lot of dragging and dropping. On the other hand, the Start menu > Favorites method lets you sort the whole list in a second. Or less.



There is definitely no way to automatically sort the Favorites into alphabetical order from within Internet Explorer 6. Right?

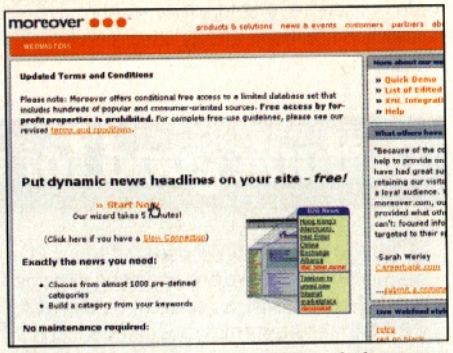
Q Getting free newsfeeds

Nothing stays where it is for very long these days, does it? I was reading your reply to a question about live news feeds in issue 59 and thought 'that is exactly what I want for my site.' When I went to the Isyndicate Web site I found that it has been taken over by a company called Yellowbrix.

I wasn't particularly bothered about who owned the company, but you now have to pay substantially for the service. Do you know of any alternative newsfeed services, preferably providing UK rather than US content and which doesn't cost an arm and a leg?

Roger Seedhouse

A **The exact service you are looking for was demonstrated in the 'Ultimate guide to making your site interactive' feature in issue 62 of *Practical Internet*. If you go to w.moreover.com/webmaster (yes, there's only one 'w' in the URL) you will find an excellent service that you can set up using an online wizard. Just go to the Web site and start the wizard, it's as easy as that.**



Add dynamic news headlines to your Web site – for free

Rid your Hotmail account of junk email

Q I travel a lot, and have found that a POP3 email account is simply too restrictive for my needs. Because I can't always guarantee that I'll be using the same modem to dial-up, I've been using a Hotmail account for the past six months or so for the majority of my emailing needs. Okay, so it's not a perfect setup, but it does the job, and allows me to keep in touch with friends and colleagues.

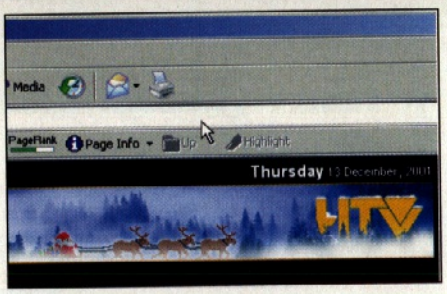
The main problem I have is junk mail – every time I log on, there are hundreds of new spam

My first computer

Q I've just purchased my first computer and I'm very pleased. I have managed to get online quite easily and I am finding it a great source of information. I was a little confused about some of the buttons in Internet Explorer 6 that I was not sure how to use or even if I needed them. A friend has told me that you can change these buttons – how do I do this?

Ken Sharp

A **Usually the default set of buttons – or icons – in the IE6 toolbar is fine for most people, but if you do want to change them, here's how you do it. You can use exactly the same method in Windows ME to change the icons, Windows XP simply looks different from Windows ME in this respect.**



1 Existing icons

If you look at the toolbar of Internet Explorer 6 you will see that there are a variety of icons that perform different functions in the Web browser. But you can add and remove icons.

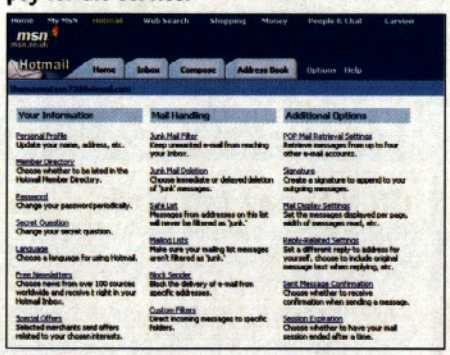
2 Pop-up menu

Right-click on any of the toolbars in Internet Explorer 6 and the toolbar pop-up menu appears, click on the 'Customize' command.

emails, mostly from porn companies and other tricksters. I know you can get programs to filter out junk in POP3 accounts, but I haven't heard about anything similar with Web-based email. Do you know how I can rid my Hotmail account of this blasted spam?

Tony Bamford

A **Hotmail was known for a long time as the biggest purveyor of useless and irritating junk mail. In a way, it became a victim of its own success – sly companies started exploiting the fact that virtually everyone in the civilised world had a Hotmail account. Consequently, it became nigh on impossible to keep track of your account, unless you scrupulously kept tabs on what was going on. Thankfully, Microsoft recently adapted its service to include a pretty decent junk filter. After you sign in, click on the 'Options' button, then choose 'Junk Mail Filter', and turn this on. There are also a number of more advanced functions to ensure you don't lose any 'proper' messages in the name of spam. If you've got a Hotmail account already, take advantage of this. If not, get in there quickly, before you have to pay for the service.**



The Quick and the dead

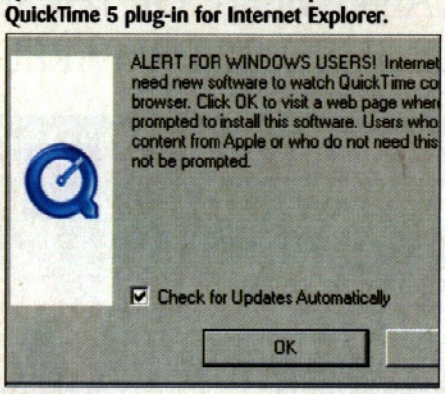
Q I'm having problems viewing some content from the Internet in Internet Explorer 6. I have been to a few Web sites such as **www.starwars.com** that provide movie previews in QuickTime format. Now although I have QuickTime 5 Professional installed I can not view the QuickTime movies from this Web site and from a few others. On the other hand, some QuickTime movies play in Internet Explorer 6 without any problems. Any ideas?

Dan Webster

A **I think the problem is caused by the version of QuickTime you have installed. Although you have version 5 on your PC many of the new movie trailers on the Web can only be viewed using QuickTime 5.02 because it has new features. You will need to install an update to QuickTime 5 from the QuickTime Web site in order to update the QuickTime 5 plug-in for Internet Explorer.**

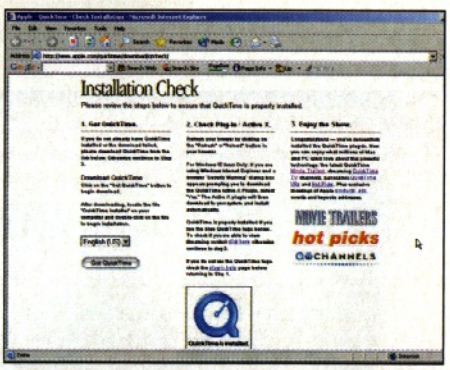
1 Go to the Web site

Open Internet Explorer 6 and go to the QuickTime Web site a **www.quicktime.com** where you will spot an advert for QuickTime 5 Professional in the top-left corner. Click on the image to go to the download area.



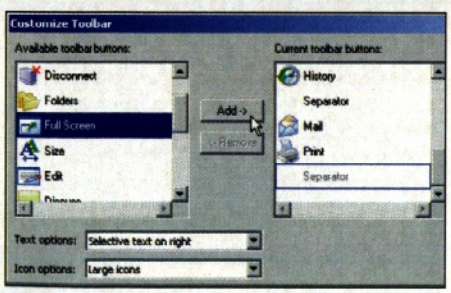
2 Detected

When the next page opens, the site checks to see if the plug-in in Internet Explorer 6 is up-to-date. If it is not, an alert box pops up to tell you that new software is required to view QuickTime in the Web browser. Click 'OK'.



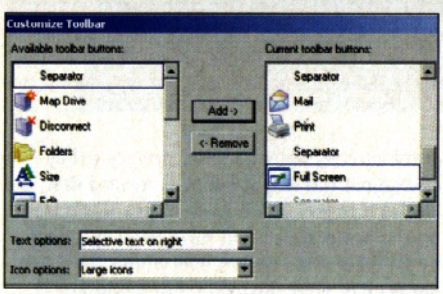
3 It's installed

You may have to wait a few minutes while the software installs into Internet Explorer 6. When it has installed, the QuickTime logo appears at the bottom of the screen with a friendly 'QuickTime is installed' message.



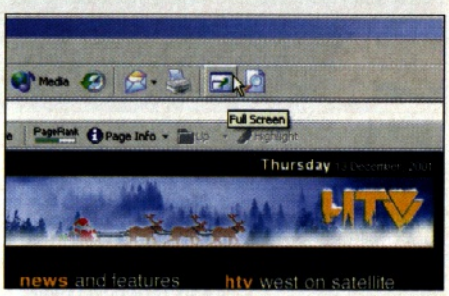
3 Add icons

When the Customize Toolbar control panel opens, you see two windows displaying the available and the current icons. To add an icon, select it in the left window and then click on the 'Add' button.



4 Move icons

Once you have copied the icons across to the right-hand window, you can select them and use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to change their position on the toolbar. Click the 'Close' button to exit.



5 Customized

Your selected icons now appear in the toolbar in the positions you have decided on. Adding and removing icons in this way enable you to set up Internet Explorer 6 exactly as you want to use it.

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM AT JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK

Dealing with privacy policies

THERE'S MORE AND MORE OF THESE POLICIES ONLINE, SO BE PREPARED

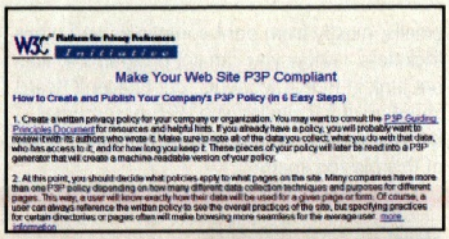
Q I've seen that lots of sites are now providing 'privacy policies' to explain how they collect and use personal information about visitors. Do you think it would be a good idea for my site to get one of these sorted out? I run a small business that sells products online.

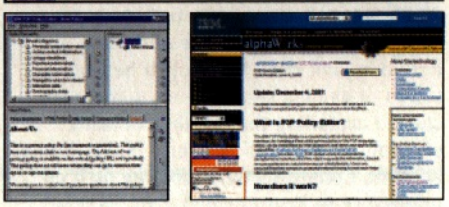
Pippa Southford

A **The importance of privacy policies has greatly increased with the introduction of the WWW Consortium's P3P system, which specifies how Web browser software can automatically detect a site's privacy policy and adjust the way it behaves toward that site as a result. The browser does this based on the preferences that have been specified by the user. This covers everything from details like your postcode that might be submitted in a registration form, to the way in which cookies are handled by the site.**

Internet Explorer 6 is one of the first browsers to use the technology, hence the sudden rush by companies to get P3P-friendly privacy statements online. You can find out more about the technology itself at www.w3.org/P3P. To generate yourself a privacy policy, IBM provides some free software at www.alphaworks.ibm.com/tech/p3peditor.

Now onto the usefulness of P3P to your site. It is not of vital importance at the moment, but as it doesn't cost anything other than time to install, it is worth taking the plunge, especially if the maintenance of customer trust is important to the continued success of your site.





*Find out about the P3P system at **www.w3.org/P3P** or download some software at **www.alphaworks.ibm.com/tech/p3editor***

Readers' tips

(Don't) pay per click

Your readers may well be aware of paying for Web site traffic using pay-per-click (PPC) search engines. Well, in a bid to encourage traffic, many of the new PPC search engines are giving money away. Sign up, and you get from $5 to $20 in free traffic (no need for a credit card). Visit **www.PayPerClickSearchEngines.com** for more details.

Steve Nash

HowIPromoteMyWebsite.com

Get the best PPC results

I've started using a great free software package called Gapster to get the most out of pay-per-click search engines. It automatically monitors and changes bids and has helped me get a lot more from my limited budget by finding price gaps. Simply entering your desired position into Gapster will adjust your bids to maintain your desired position without ever exceeding your maximum bid amount. It's available from from **www.did-it.com/gapster.**

Teresa Mountford

Favourite icon frustration

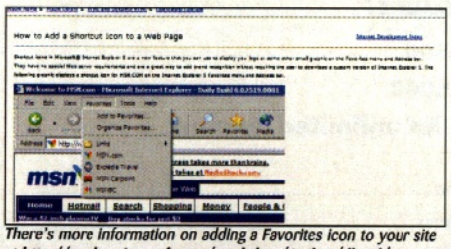
Q How do I add a logo to my Web site so that when it is put into 'My Favorites' folder on the browser the logo appears next to my site's title?

Neil Garside

A **The feature you describe will also make the icon appear in certain Web browser's address bars. This neat little way of stamping your site's identity on the browser was introduced with IE5 but has now been more widely adopted by other browser makers.**

All you have to do is create a favourite icon sized 16 pixels square, using the Windows Icon format. This can be exported to from many graphics packages or converted to using the free generator at www.favicon.com.

That graphic should then be named 'favicon.ico' and placed in the main directory of your Web site. It will be automatically downloaded by certain browsers, and you can optionally provide HTML code to specify a different icon location. Simply place the code <link rel="shortcut icon" href="/path/to/iconname.ico"> in the <head> section of your code.



There's more information on adding a Favorites icon to your site at http://msdn.microsoft.com/workshop/Author/dhtml/howto/ShortcutIcon.asp. This also provides some script code to create an 'Add to Favourites' button on your page

Seeking Validation

Q As an avid reader of your Web building advice, I've always tried to stick close to the official HTML specification so that my Web pages will look good in a whole range of different browsers. However, when I run my pages through the Validator at **http://validator.w3.org**, it always complains about not having a "DOCTYPE declaration". What is this and how do I add it to my page?

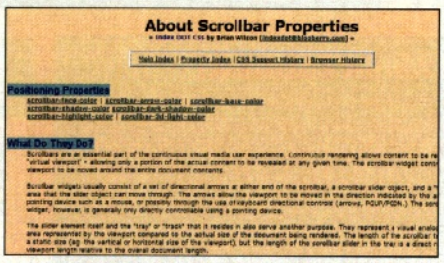
Sarah Beckett

A **The official HTML specification states that each document should begin with a DOCTYPE declaration to make it clear what version of HTML is being used. Web browsers generally ignore them, so if the Validator is only complaining about DOCTYPE you shouldn't really worry. If you do want to be squeaky clean, you can find out all about the exciting range of options by visiting www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator/doctype.html. The two most commonly used DOCTYPE formats are for HTML 4.01 Transitional and HTML 4.01 Frameset. They are shown below, and should be carefully copied into the very start of your Web pages, before the <html> tag. Be careful- DOCTYPE declarations are case sensitive.**

They both indicate that the page is written in HTML 4.01 but may contain officially defunct (or deprecated) elements. The Frameset DOCTYPE should only be used with frame-based documents.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD
HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
```

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD
HTML 4.01 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/frameset.dtd"
>
```



Painting with scrollbars

Q I've noticed that some sites change the colour of my Web browser scrollbars when I visit them. Please can you explain how this works and whether it's possible to feature it on my sites?

Ivor Levy

A **The scrollbar colouring feature is an unofficial extension to the official style sheet specification. It was first seen in Microsoft's IE5.5 and has been picked up by some other browsers, although neither Netscape nor Opera support it. There are various peculiarities of the way Microsoft has implemented the scrollbar colouring – for example, it won't work when specified in an external style sheet. So, there are quite a lot of drawbacks to bear in mind, but if you're desperate to colour those scrollbars, the code you need to add just before the </head> tag of your Web page is shown below. This uses only three of the eight possible scrollbar properties – you can find out about the others at www.blooberry.com/indexdot/css/properties/scrollbar.htm. Obviously you should replace the colour codes shown with your own (see www.lynda.com/hexv.html to help pick colours).**

```
<style type="text/css">
<!–
```

→

Readers' sites

Make your site immortal – send the URL to **james@paragon.co.uk**

Future Movies

URL: www.futuremovies.co.uk
Creator: Johan De Silva
Comment: Since making an appearance in the 'Design Doctor' column, this site has come along in leaps and bounds. It's now a much more interesting and useful resource for anyone with a vague interest in the cinema, and the design has improved along with the content. Visit this site today and support your fellow readers!

Go MX

URL: www.gomx.co.uk
Creator: Robert Perry
Comment: This site can't be faulted in terms of its content – there's a comprehensive introduction to everything you need in order to get started in the muddy world of motocross. There are a few design problems – such as the unnecessary use of Flash for navigation, and the lack of colour on most pages.

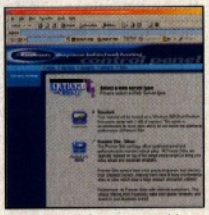
James Campbell's Home Page

URL: www.jamescampbell.info
Creator: James Campbell
Comment: Although he spends much of his time telling stories and jokes, James Campbell isn't a bad Web designer. This site is a fascinating introduction to his work; it's great to see original creative writing published on a personal home page. Design wise it works just fine, although text and images are all a bit on the large side.

WIN £10,000 OF WEB HOSTING!

DON'T MISS THIS AMAZING COMPETITION, HELD IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BIGGEST WEB HOSTING COMPANY IN THE COUNTRY

IN CONJUNCTION WITH Fasthosts Internet Limited, the largest UK Web hosting company, we're offering you the chance to win one of five Web hosting packages.



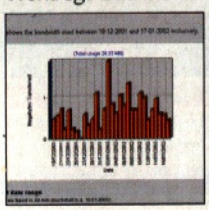
The powerful, customisable control panels let you manage all aspects of your Web hosting

1st Prize: Matrix Linux Elite Dedicated Server package worth over £2300.

The Matrix Linux Elite is the most powerful 'Web in a box' solution available. The system comes equipped with its own Virtual Control Panel allowing incredible ease of use. Advanced users have full root telnet access to the system. A Matrix Linux server can host thousands of individual Web sites or can be dedicated to one large eCommerce site.

2nd Prize: 15 Reseller Accounts

A Fasthosts reseller account allows you to host an unlimited number of domain names and email accounts all managed from a central, easy to use and fully integrated Virtual Control Panel. The reseller account is the ideal solution for Web designers, resellers and entrepreneurs. There is an extensive portfolio of innovative features available that can be sold to your clients such as email virus scanning, live statistics and Microsoft FrontPage Extensions.



About Fasthosts

The success of Fasthosts came about by developing an innovative and flexible suite of products and services, tailored to customer needs. Andrew Michael, Managing Director of Fasthosts Internet, explains. "Fasthosts is all about putting the customer in control. Our unique Virtual Control Panel and core backend server technology allows us to offer extremely powerful hosting packages at very competitive prices."

Fasthosts has always offered its own Control Panel System which allows customers to easily manage their entire hosting solution. Using the Control Panel, customers can register and set up hosting for domain names; create and manage databases; set up email and FTP accounts; install features such as FrontPage Extensions and even create custom control panels for their own customers. These are just a few of the possibilities offered by the Fasthosts Control Panel and many more features are scheduled to be rolled out during the coming months. Fasthosts also boasts some of the best technology in the business and manages its own multi-million pound data centre. Manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the data centre is equipped with multiple UPS backup power supplies, FM2000 fire suppression and a 440 KW backup generator.

A combination of industry-leading products and services, world-class customer support and competitive pricing has made Fasthosts the largest provider of Web hosting services in the UK. The company also powers many of the smaller Web hosting providers and has an extensive range of reseller opportunities.

Enter now to win

How many domains can be hosted on a Fasthosts reseller account?

A 500
B 5000
C An unlimited amount

Name.....
Address.....
Email.....
Daytime Tel:.....

Send you answers as an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk**, putting 'Fasthost' as the subject. Alternatively, jot your answer down on a postcard/back of an envelope and send the entry to:

Fasthosts Competition,
Practical Internet,
Paragon Publishing,
St Peters Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Answers to reach us no later than **6 March, 2002**. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number on your application.

Rules of entry

Employees of Paragon Publishing Ltd and Fasthosts, their agents, wholesalers or retailers and/or relations, may not participate. Participants must be over 18 years of age and resident in the United Kingdom. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no cash alternative to any prize offered. Proof of postage cannot be accepted as proof of delivery and no responsibility can be accepted for lost, delayed or damaged entries. Multiple entries, including multiple email entries, will not be accepted. The closing date for this competition is 6 March, 2002 From time to time, Paragon Publishing Ltd sends out news about new products and opportunities that are of interest to our readers. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box. ☐

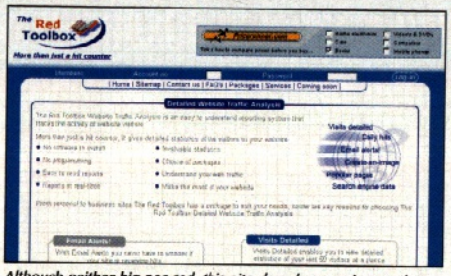
```
BODY { scrollbar-base-color: #99CC99;
scrollbar-arrow-color: #669966; scrollbar-
shadow-color: #330033 }
// -->
</style>
```

Counter conundrum

Q I'm keen to find out as much information as possible about the visiting patterns to my Web site. Is there any way of getting detailed reports without spending a fortune? As I'm hoping to start attracting advertisers to my site it would be really useful to know about how long people are staying at the site and how they got there in the first place.

Jenny Wood

A **There's a new Web service that should more than satisfy your hunger for site statistics. It's called Big Red Toolbox, and can be found at www.bigredtoolbox.com. Although the basic package is temptingly free of charge, it doesn't offer the range of reporting options that you're after. You can get these for a modest monthly fee by subscribing to one of its better packages. The 'Visits Detailed' report looks particularly handy, allowing you to analyse right down to the individual visitor level. It also includes a visit duration tool, which tries to work out how long people linger at your site. I would be hesitant about using that data in a profile for potential advertisers, as Big Red Toolbox service doesn't use a particularly accurate way of measuring visitor duration. Still, it remains the best value offering that I've seen to date, with the honourable but less feature-packed exception of the free Extreme DM service at www.extreme-dm.com.**



Although neither big nor red, this site does have an impressive range of tools for finding out more about your site's visitors

Elusive FrontPage extensions

Q I spent a small fortune on FrontPage 2002, but now can't get my site online properly! Whenever I go to the 'Publish Web' option, the program tells me that the server does not have extensions, and so a lot of my

Setting up a diversion

Q I've recently done some reorganisation of my Web site. I want to make sure that I can redirect any users who have the old addresses bookmarked to the correct new location. What is the best way of doing this?

Jack Morris

A **The quickest and best way of setting up this kind of redirection don't necessarily add up to the same thing. In terms of speed, configuring a server redirection is far superior to any other solution, as the user will have to be very sharp to notice that any forwarding has taken place. For most Web servers, this is done using a configuration file called '.htaccess'.**

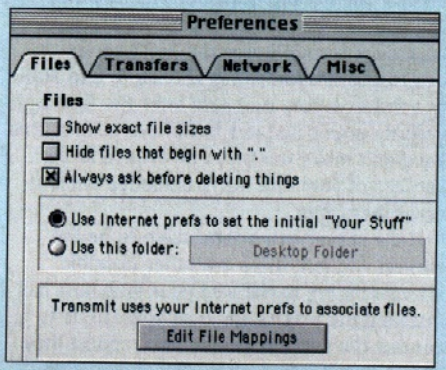
However, if you are trying to draw attention to the fact that your site has been reorganised, with the eventual aim of removing the 'courtesy redirection', this might not be the best route. It may be better to set up a page with a message about the update, which contains a tag to automatically forward the user after a given pause. For many readers this will be the only feasible option, as the server redirect described above may not be a feature offered by their Web host.

Both of these methods are described in the following steps.

```
Redirect photos.html /photos/index.html
Redirect contact.html
http://www.somewhereelse.com/contact.html
ErrorDocument 404 sitechanges.html
```

1 An example .htaccess file

This example shows how you can redirect users and handle errors relating to site changes. The first two lines will send users requesting the specified pages to the new addresses; the third line specifies an error message page for files that cannot be found.



2 Activating .htaccess file

The .htaccess file needs to be placed in the same directory as the files it refers to and should be uploaded in the normal way to your Web server. It may seem to be invisible on the server as some FTP packages do not display files with names beginning with a full stop.

3 Test your .htaccess file

To see if the configuration has worked, try accessing one of the pages that has been configured for redirection. If you get sent to the new page, all is well. Otherwise, check that your Web server supports .htaccess redirection, or follow the next step.

```
<meta http-equiv="Refresh" content="2;
URL=http://www.thenewsite.com/thenewpa
ge.html">
```

4 Use a Meta Redirect

The alternative is to insert the above code just before the </head> tag of a dummy Web page. Put a message on the page explaining that the redirection will happen. Alter the number after 'content=' to set the delay before the forwarding takes place.

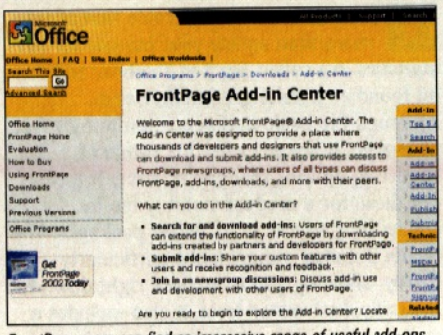
site's features won't work. My Web host claims that it has FrontPage extensions installed, and I know that a friend who uses the same host has not had any such problems. What's going on?!

Arthur Hughes

A **It sounds like your Web host is running an old version of the FrontPage server extensions. The 2002 version of the software requires different extensions, so it may be that your friend is using an earlier version that is compatible with the extensions being used by your Web host. We have heard reports of some hosts claiming that they are running the 2002 extensions when they were in fact using an earlier version.**

You can find out the definite answer by looking at the _vti_inf.html file which should exist in the root directory of your Web site. The HTML source of this file (use the 'View Source' menu option in your Web browser) will contain the server extensions version. Just to confuse matters, the 2002 series extensions are known as version 5, and 2000 as version 4. Any numbers after the first digit indicate minor updates to the extensions. This shouldn't make too much difference to the success of your site being uploaded without error messages.

If the server extensions seem to be the correct version, there are other possible issues relating to the way your Web host has installed the extensions – all you can do is contact the support people and request they check their configuration. You should also check your own settings – such as double checking the password you're using and making sure you haven't deleted any of the special FrontPage configuration files that your host should have placed on the Web server.



FrontPage users can find an impressive range of useful add-ons at www.microsoft.com/frontpage/downloads/addin

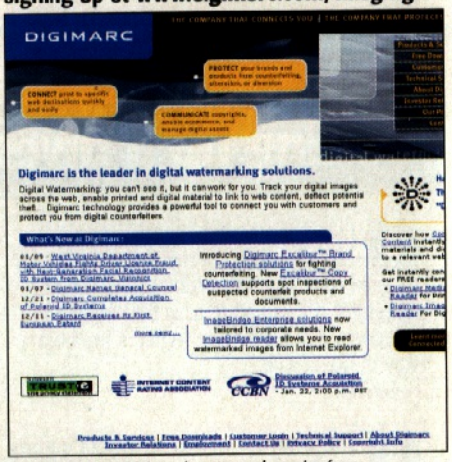
Watermarks wanted

Q Is it true that invisible watermarks can protect my images from unscrupulous users? How reliable is this technology and how can I start using it with my photos?

Logan Groh

A **Watermarks stake your claim to the copyright of an image, and can be embedded in JPEG images in a way that is invisible to the naked eye, but detected by equipped software packages. They will then alert the user where appropriate and may prevent duplication or restricted use of the image. We featured a package called Image Optimizer in issue 60, which is one of the many graphics tools that will embed watermarks in your images. Searching for 'watermark' at a software download site like www.softseek.com or www.download.com will produce a list of other packages that support watermarking.**

Before thinking about the software end of things, you should first get signed up with a watermark provider like Digimarc. The company you choose for this may well impact the kind of software you can use; they will be able to advise on – and probably provide – the required kit. This could be as simple as installing a plug-in to a graphics package you have already installed. It will cost if you want to watermark lots of images, but you can test out the Digimarc service for nothing by signing up at www.digimarc.com/imaging.



You can test out Digimarc's watermark service from www.digimarc.com/imaging

How mega is 10Mb?

Q I've been given ten megabytes of Web space by my ISP to create a site. Can you give me an idea of how many Web pages will fit into that sort of allocation?

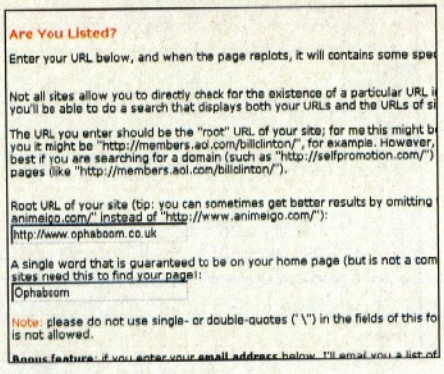
Melanie Yeats

Searching for popularity

Q Is there a service out there that tells me which search engines my Web site is listed on? I'd prefer if it did this for free. I know that you can visit each engine and type in your Web page address but that would take ages.

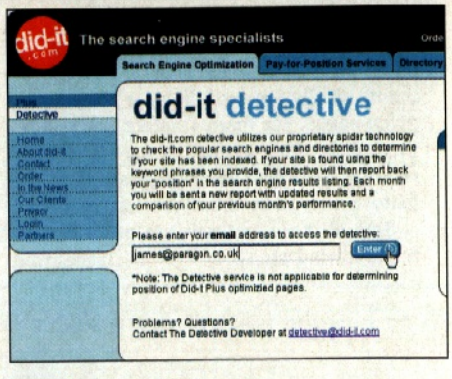
James Chapman
www.directfuture.co.uk

A **There are various ways of assessing a site's presence on search engines, although of course you need to remember that the most important thing is how highly you rank when someone searches for keywords that are related to your site. These steps should provide you with a few ideas of how to find out about both aspects of search engine popularity.**



1 The hard way

One of SelfPromotion.com's features is a tool that will generate a page of links, each of which will check whether your site appears on a search engine. Of course, going through all the links takes some time. Visit **www.selfpromotion.com/check.t**.

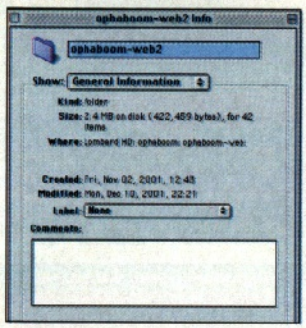


2 The easier way

The did-it Detective at **www.did-it.com/search_engine/detective.shtml** will work out whether you are listed on the key search engines and also how highly you rank on certain keywords. This report is delivered by email.

A **This is the Web site equivalent of asking about the length of a piece of string. It all depends on the quantity of text and graphics used on each of your pages. As a general guide, you shouldn't create Web pages that consist of more than 60 kilobytes total in text and graphics. If all your pages were 60 kilobytes in total size, then you would be able to fit 170 pages into your allocated space. Obviously this figure will be reduced if you have very big images or other files linked to any of the pages, and it will increase in the event that you re-use lots of your graphics across the site.**

You can easily check the total size of a site by locating the folder which contains all the Web pages and graphics. In Windows, right click on the folder and select 'Properties' to bring up a window that states the total size of the folder. Mac users should click on the folder and press 'Apple-I' on their keyboards to get similar information displayed. Remember that 10Mb is equal to 10,240 Kilobytes or 1,048,576 Bytes.



This Web site contains about half a meg of content. Be careful with Mac 'Get Info' windows – the first figure provided is not the actual size of the files; you need to look at the bracketed amount, provided in bytes, to get the real answer. This is a result of the strange way that Macs manage data on hard disks

Invisible Updates

Q I work on a site that is maintained by a number of different people. We have a single 'Latest Updates' page for the whole site, but some of the contributors forget to add information to this page when they change the site. Is there any automated way of solving this problem?

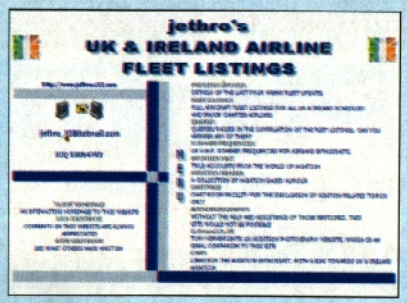
Dave Lambert

A **There are two solutions. The more expensive and time-consuming option is to move the whole site to a new Web management system. This could be as 'easy' as buying everyone a copy of FrontPage and using the team working facilities of the software to collaborate on the site. It would be more tricky but less expensive to use one of the free content management systems available from the Code Library at www.phpbuilder.com. Although less flexible than FrontPage, it would provide you with a Web-based control panel for the site, so other workers would be able to submit changes using Web browsers.**

The second option would be to stick with the existing arrangements and install a tool to generate an updates page. This can be done free of charge using the excellent site search engine FreeFind, which is covered in this issue's tutorial section on page 64.

FreeFind will provide you with a link that will generate a 'What's New' page, listing the modified date of the page and its title. By using the template features of FreeFind you can make this look like it is an integral part of your site. The main sticking point is the frequency of update – FreeFind won't constantly monitor your site so changes may take a day or so to appear.

Design Doctor



UK & Ireland Air Fleet Listings

Creator: Jethro Quinze
URL: www.jethros.i12.com

JETHRO'S SITE DOES an excellent job of reinforcing the stereotype that WWW stands for Weird World Web. There is quite a lot of work needed to make this site approachable to all but the most air fleet jargon savvy of visitors.

A PICTURE IS WORTH...

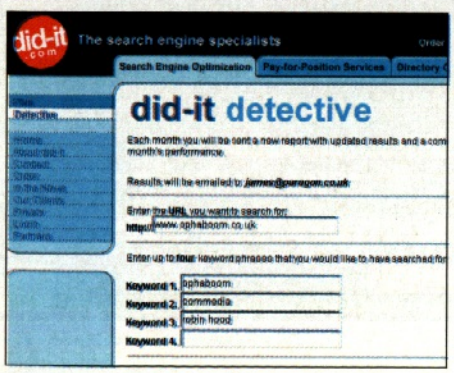
...at least a thousand air fleet listings. This site would be a lot more interesting if it offered pictures of the aircraft it so lovingly lists. Flying machines can be good looking things – why not put some pictures online as wallpapers?

SHOW OFF YOUR LINKS

Links are the most important asset of any Web page, so make sure they're clearly visible. The style sheet of this site not only takes the customary underlining away from all its links, but also renders them in a dull shade of grey that is barely distinguishable from the normal text colour.

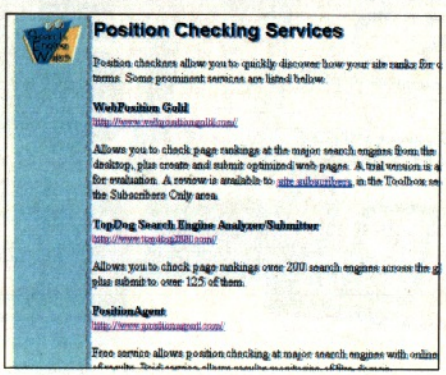
UPFRONT UPDATES

Regular visitors to the site will be interested mainly in the site updates, so it makes sense to provide the full details of these on the front page, rather than to hide them away in their own section.



3 Configure did-it

It pays to really think carefully about the keywords you provide to the did-it service. You can only enter have four keywords; they should obviously already appear on your site in order for the search engine to have associated them with your pages.



4 Look for alternatives

If you want to find some other search engine checking and positioning tools, a good listing is available from **www.searchenginewatch.com/resources/checkers.** That site also features lots of useful information on all aspects of search engines.

Last issue update

Following last issue's question, 'Making a Career of It' we wish to clarify that Computeach is not a short course provider. The duration of the CIW course is 950 hours study plus 15 in-centre days. CIW certification is recognised by The Association of Internet Professionals and the International Webmasters Association. CIW certification is also incorporated within IBM and Intel's global training programmes. Apologies for this misunderstanding.

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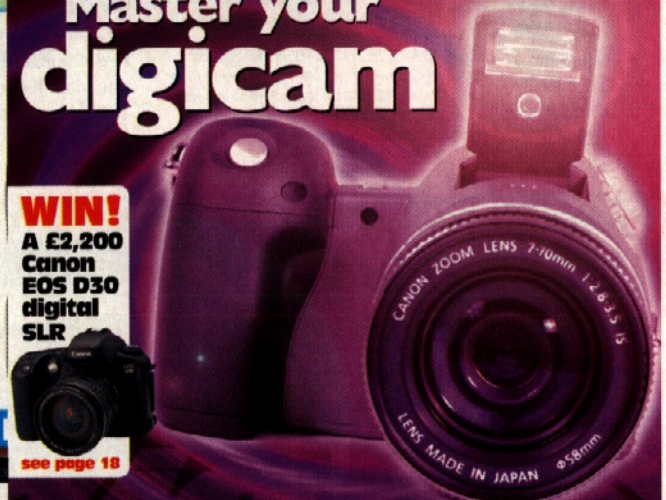

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see page 18

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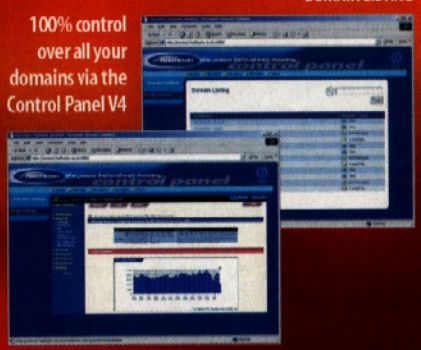

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Your Business Online

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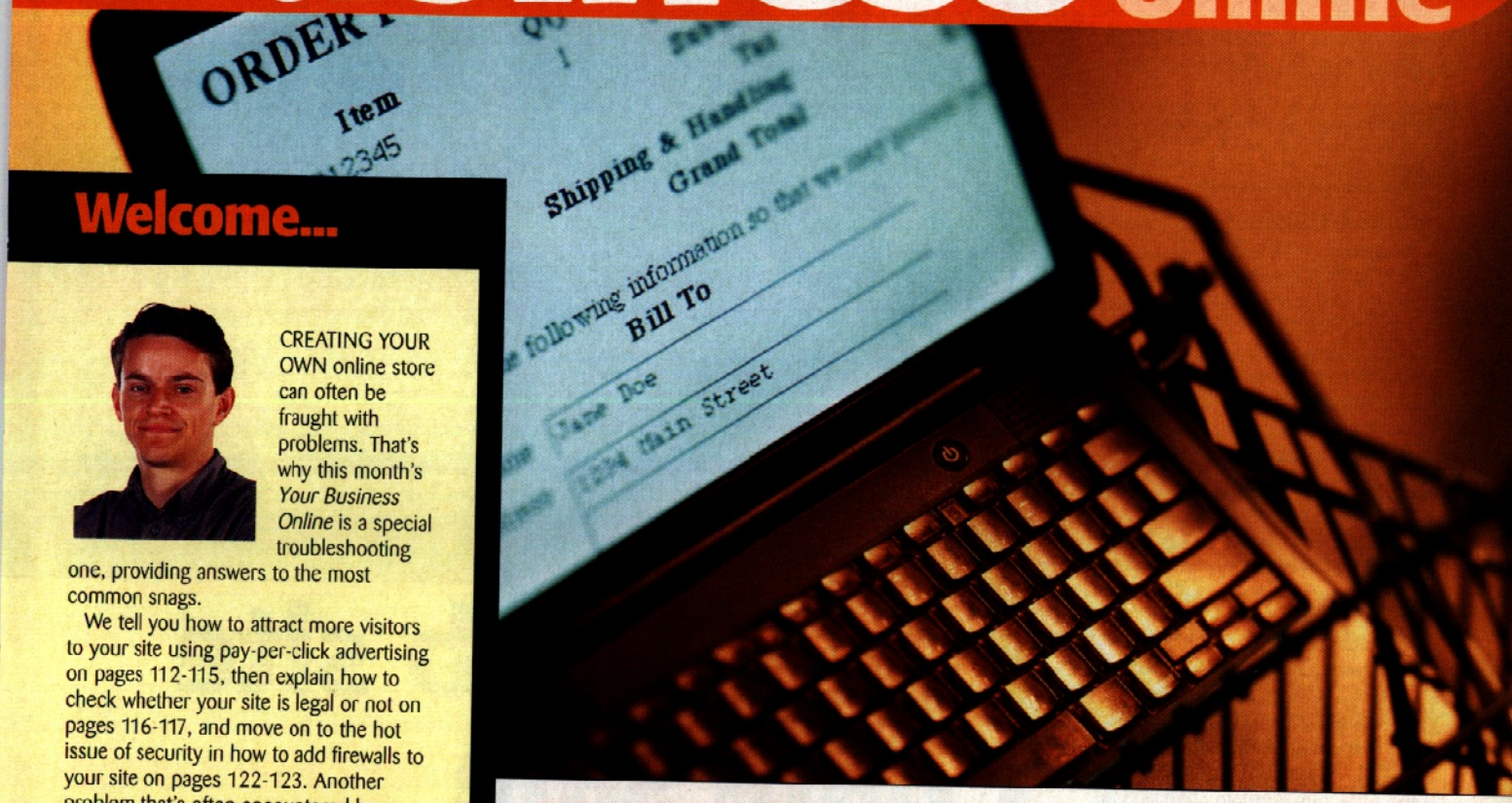

Welcome...

CREATING YOUR OWN online store can often be fraught with problems. That's why this month's *Your Business Online* is a special troubleshooting one, providing answers to the most common snags.

We tell you how to attract more visitors to your site using pay-per-click advertising on pages 112-115, then explain how to check whether your site is legal or not on pages 116-117, and move on to the hot issue of security in how to add firewalls to your site on pages 122-123. Another problem that's often encountered by businesses is how to get your products to customers the quick and easy way without incurring high expenses. We provide you with a few tips on how to do it.

This is the final issue of *Your Business Online* that I will be editing – I'm taking up a new job as a Web site manager – so I hope you have found this section useful in recent months. May your online business live long and prosper!

Mark Newman

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Find out the best way of dispatching goods

TOP STORY

Create your site the easy way

NEW SITE CREATION AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT PACKAGE HELPS BUSINESSES GET ONLINE WITH MINIMUM EFFORT

A NEW WEB site creation package and combined content management package aimed at small and medium sized businesses has been unveiled by Connect Internet Solutions.

SiteMaker takes users through the process of creating a Web site, step-by-step. Users can select from a wide range of design templates that convey a professional and effective image.

Once a site has been created, SiteMaker ensures information on the site can be effectively managed by providing easy access for editing text, changing graphics and even selecting different design templates.

According to Anne Keddie, Marketing Manager of Connect Internet Solutions, "too often the content management aspect of a Web presence is neglected. The SiteMaker program will encourage organisations to keep their Web content up-to-date by removing these unwelcome technical barriers."

The SiteMaker package, which costs from £450 plus VAT per year, includes a registered domain name, hosting automatic submission to a selection of search engines and mail forwarding to a preferred email address.

For more details about SiteMaker, including a demo of the software's functions and examples of sites that have been created using the package, see Connect Internet's site at **www.connect.org.uk.**

News in brief

→Actinic has begun shipping its new order management software, Actinic Order Manager. This self-contained order download and fulfilment application is aimed at merchants who wish to control their order processing but prefer to leave site maintenance with their designer. It costs £149 + VAT from www.actinic.co.uk.

→NCM Direct (www.ncm-direct.com), an online credit management service for small businesses, says small businesses face the highest risk of insolvency in the current economic climate. Its bleak warning comes as it launches NCM Direct, an online credit management service offering a range of tailored credit management solutions for small businesses, including free information on over 100 countries, a range of credit insurance products and a collections service.

→The Health & Safety Executive (www.hse.gov.uk) has announced new guidelines to encourage employers to give adequate training to their call centre staff. This could not have been more timely since a recent report by Netcall states that call centres are losing staff at a faster rate than they are recruiting – not a great situation to be in considering the current economic climate. Roy Sheridan, CEO of ViewsCast, says if call centres are to be successful they need to embrace the concept of customer service among employees.

→A sophisticated hit counter which gives you accurate figures on the number of visitors to your site has been launched by The Red Toolbox (www.theredtoolbox.com). The unique 'Visits detailed' option gives users a visit-by-visit, hit-by-hit view of their site. There are three packages ranging in price from free to £20/month – depending on the number of hits your site receives.

Keep Web site data safe

WORLDPAY, THE MULTI-currency secure payment processing company and Clunk Click, the online data backup and recovery services provider, have launched a joint service that lets small businesses protect their information.

PC users in general – and Web traders in particular – are totally reliant on the information stored on their PCs, laptops and servers, especially as few people back up their files.

The launch comes after new DTI research revealed that more than 75 per cent of businesses fail within 18 months of a major data loss because of their ineffective information storage and recovery processes.

By subscribing to the Clunk Click service, the headache of trying to manage an ongoing effective, efficient and secure data backup and recovery system is removed.

Through an easy install process, a small piece of intelligent software resides on the PC, laptop or server. After specifying the data to be backed up, Clunk Click takes over and automatically encrypts and prepares the data for secure online transmission to the duplicated offsite Clunk Click Data area.

Prices range from £8.95 a month upwards. More details can be found at **www.clunkclick.net** and **www.worldpay.com**.

Free currency converters

DOES YOUR SITE accept lots of orders from overseas? If so, it's a good idea to add a currency converter to your site's pages. This will ensure that foreign users can quickly find out how much your products will cost in their own currency.

The Shoppers Currency Converter from Xe.com, which features constantly updated currency rates, can be added to your site for free in a matter of minutes.

The tool allows for calculations to be embedded directly into your Web site, allowing users to perform currency calculations without leaving your Web page. For more details see **www.xe.com/ecc/shoppers**.

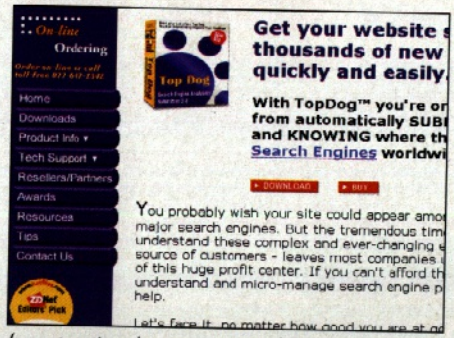
Become a top dog

WANT TO ATTRACT more visitors to your Web site using search engines? If you do, you must regularly check that your site has a high ranking for your chosen keywords.

TopDog makes this easier by analysing your site's position on 290 of the world's top search engines. You'll see exactly where you need to ramp up your Web presence – plus keep an eye on your competitors.

The software, which costs $179 (approx £120) from **www.topdog.com**, also lets you submit your site's details to 133 search engines (including Yahoo! and other top directories).

You can also check that submissions are accepted and fine-tune each aspect of your site



(construction, layout, copy etc) based on your custom-generated TopDog Search Engine Score until it gets the top positioning you want.

Safety first

Completely revised and much expanded, the new edition of the highly respected *Building Internet Firewalls* has been released by O'Reilly (ISBN 1-56592-871-7) and now includes advice for Unix, Linux and Windows NT users.

This practical and detailed guide explains in step-by-step fashion how to design and install firewalls and configure Internet services to work with a firewall. It covers a wide range of services and protocols and offers a complete list of resources, including the location of many publicly available firewalls construction tools. It costs £35.50 and you can get more details from **www.oreilly.com/catalog/fire2**.

Your Business Online Q&A

GERARD LISTON OF SMALLBIZ UK (WWW.SMALLBIZ.UK.COM) ANSWERS YOUR EBUSINESS QUESTIONS. EMAIL HIM AT PI@PARAGON.CO.UK

Q I have quite a lot of information on my site and need a way to display it. What's the best way of adding a database to my site?

Carol Paige

A **Assuming you want to incorporate a database of customer information within your Web site, the best way is probably to create an eCommerce system.**

All eCommerce systems are powered by a database, no matter how complex or simple. You can build a basic database using one of a number of software products, such as Actinic Catalog (www.actinic.co.uk). This is easy and inexpensive, and enables you to link your database with other business systems. Other solutions incorporate everything required for online trading and customer management. You can find out more on the smallbiz.uk.com Web site.

Don't forget that anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice outlined in the 1998 Data Protection Act. Data must be:

- **Fairly and lawfully processed**
- **Processed for limited purposes**
- **Adequate, relevant and not excessive**
- **Accurate**
- **Not kept longer than necessary**
- **Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights**
- **Secure**
- **Not transferred between countries**

But don't be put off by legislation. The cost and effort required to build a customer database is massively outweighed by the potential benefits.

Q Do you have any tips on how to get press releases about my site printed in the national media? I want to try and drum up some extra business, and thought this would be quite effective.

Tim Brick

A **PR is sometimes perceived as being a black art requiring personal contacts with a host of editorial staff and Shakespearean writing skills. The truth of the matter is that effective PR is largely common sense but it takes time and effort.**

For a start, think about the people you are trying to target. Although you indicate that you want to see articles about your site in national press, does that mean a daily paper or one of the hundreds of specialist publications? The editor will not publish an irrelevant story and you will not want enquiries from site visitors won't want to buy anything.

Effective media targeting need not involve a PR agency or expensive media directories. Services such as LivePressWire provides an affordable way to issue targeted press releases.

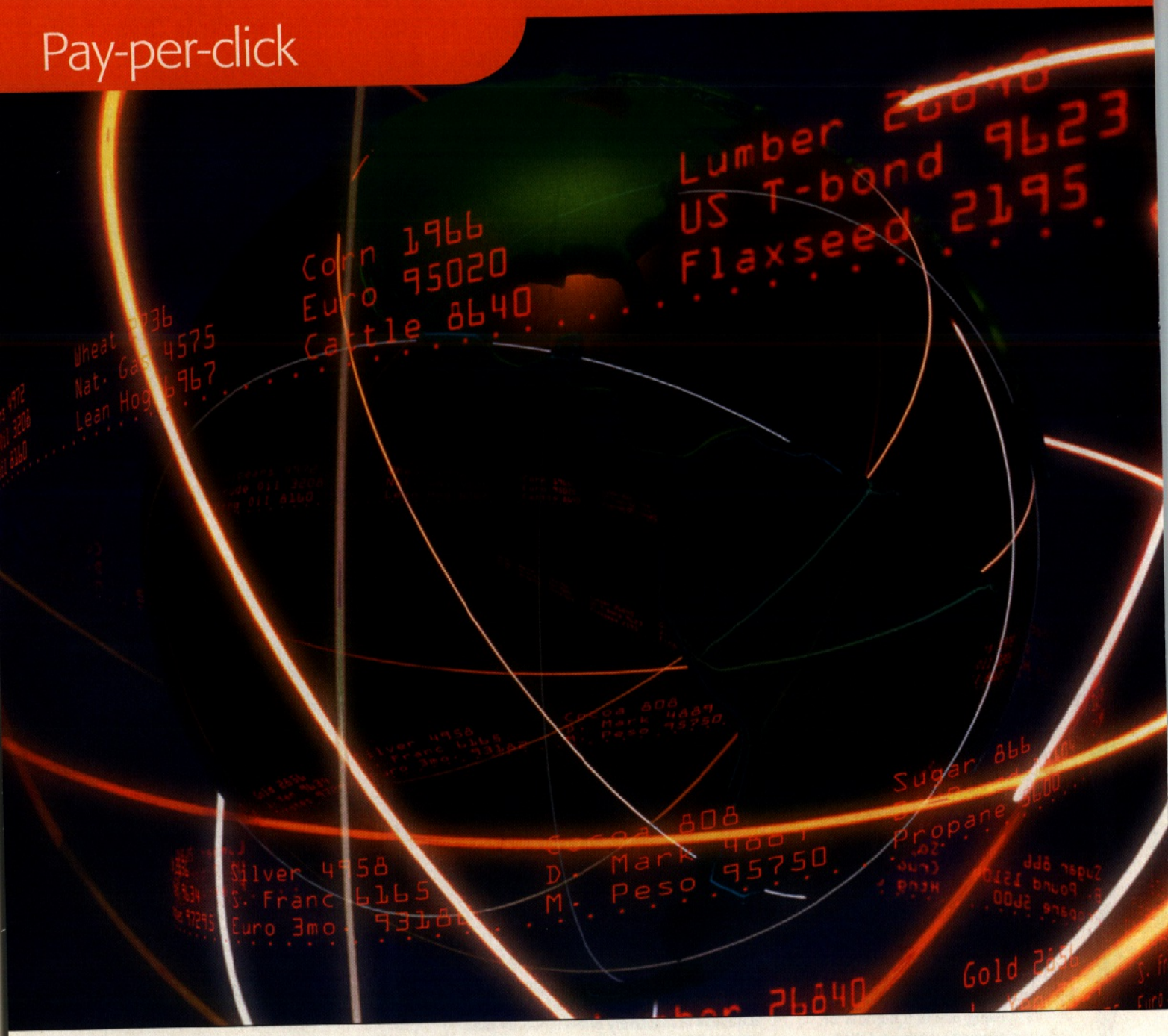
However fascinating you find your own business, an editor will take a much more objective view. Just present the facts clearly and concisely – ideally accompanied by a good photograph.

Q Do I really need to put together a business plan for my site if I only expect to be a small operation? I don't want to waste time that could be spent elsewhere.

George Flint

A **A business plan for a small business could be contained on a few sheets of paper and may take little more than a few hours to compile. Although much of the information may be in the heads of those running the business, the exercise of putting it on paper helps to define a direction for the business.**

If you're not sure where to start, Smallbiz.uk.com provides a free software tool to help build a marketing plan (go to Sales Success/Marketing Plans) along with various materials to help construct appropriate business plans. Banks will usually provide business planning services while your local Business Link (www.businesslink.org) will also offer appropriate advice.



Why pay-per-click gets you more hits

DRIVING LOTS OF VISITORS TO YOUR WEB SITE IS A PRIORITY FOR BUSINESSES. IF CONVENTIONAL SEARCH ENGINES HAVE FAILED TO ATTRACT THE CROWDS, PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING COULD BE WORTH CONSIDERING. **MARK NEWMAN** REPORTS

Achieving a high ranking for your Web site is a tricky and time-consuming task – you need to get exactly the right formula of keywords and meta tags before you start to see dividends. All too often this takes weeks or even months and the results are very hit and miss.

An alternative – if you can afford it – is pay-per-click advertising where you spend money to get your site added to search engines and pay for every person who clicks a link to visit your Web site.

This needn't be an incredibly large amount – it's often as little as five pence or less – but the more you spend the higher rankings you get.

Pick a pay-per-click engine

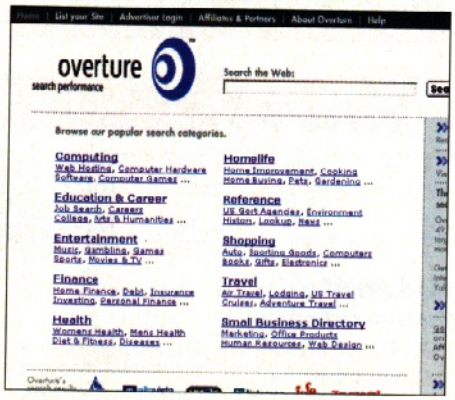
Following the enormous success of Overture (formerly called Goto.com) with pay-per-click advertising, more than 200 pay-pay-click search sites have sprung up, all offering you the chance to get your Web site listed – at a price.

Out of these pay-per-click engines, only a few actually have the search volume to generate a respectable number of clicks for your site, so if you're considering spending some money, our advice is to tread wearily.

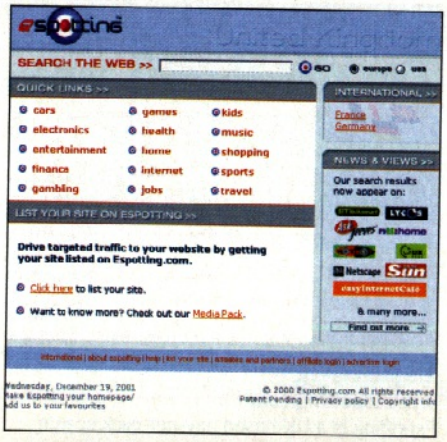
Most pay-per-click sites require a set up fee of between $10–$25 which can be applied to clickthroughs. They offer low minimum bids of $0.01, but with limited search volumes, they may bring you only a few clicks each day!

It's therefore best to use the bigger, well-known pay-per-click engines with high search volumes that can also deliver higher clickthroughs. These include Overture (**www.overture.com**), Sprinks (**www.sprinks.com**), FindWhat (**www.findwhat.com**) and the UK service Espotting (**www.espotting.com**).

Overture is widely regarded as the best because it serves over two billion search queries a month through its partnership with America Online, Lycos, AltaVista, Netscape, Hotbot and InfoSpace. It's worth every penny!



Overture is widely regarded as being the best pay-per-click search engine for your site to be seen on.



If your site is after UK visitors then the UK pay-per-click search engine Espotting is a good choice

If you're unsure about whether pay-per-click is for you, you can test some of the services by committing only to the minimum set up fees. If these provide you with a decent stream of traffic, you can always top up your account with more money. This way, you minimise your risk to only $10 to $25 per engine.

Find relevant keywords

Since you are paying for each clickthrough on your bid, it makes sense to ensure that the keywords you bid for are going to be relevant to your target audience.

Overture's excellent free Search Term Suggestion Tool at **http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion** is invaluable for doing this. Using it, all you have to do is type a keyword into it and to be told how many times the word was searched for, indicating its popularity. The more popular the keyword is, the higher your clickthroughs will be. Overture also generates a list of similar keywords and their search counts in the previous month. Overture's service is one of the best tools for finding good keywords to bid on.

Another alternative is to download Good Keywords at **www.softnik.com/products/gkw/index.htm** or get it from this month's *Practical Internet* CD-ROM.

You simply enter a keyword into this free software and it displays a list of relevant search terms and their search counts across multiple PPC engines.

One other tool that's well worth a mention is JimTools' Keyword Toolkit at **http://jimworld.nu/keywords.html**. It might have an amateurish name but the program can generate a list of related keyword possibilities, some with search counts, from Overture, Google, Magellan and WebCrawler.

Find popular keywords using Good Keywords on our CD

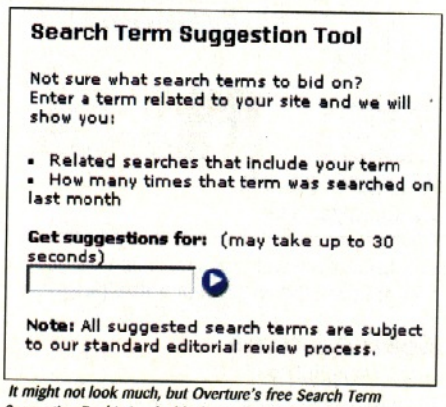
How much should you bid?

The bigger pay-per-click engines such as Overture and Sprinks require a minimum bid of $0.05 (about 3p) while startup engines have lesser minimums of $0.01 (1p).

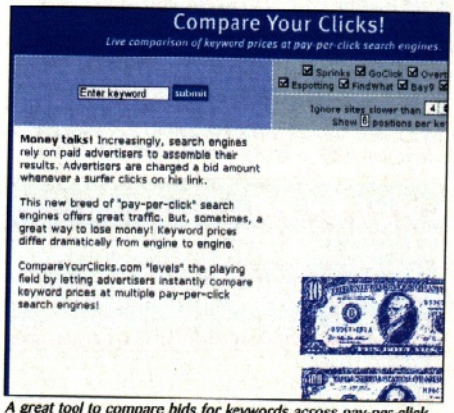
How much to bid depends on your return-on-investment (ROI) calculations. For example, if you bid $1.00 (69p) per visitor, and one in every ten visitors buys your product, your cost-per-sale is $10.00 (£6.90).

So if each sale of your product produces a gross profit of $15 (£10.35) then your net profit will be £3.45 (that's £10.35 gross profit less £6.90 cost-per-sale). Your return-on-investment (ROI), before non-marketing expenses, is about 50%. Always price your bids to achieve a positive ROI.

A great tool that you can use to compare bids for a specific keyword across multiple pay-per-



It might not look much, but Overture's free Search Term Suggestion Tool is invaluable for finding keywords to bid on in pay-per-click search engines



*A great tool to compare bids for keywords across pay-per-click engines is at **www.compareyourclicks.com***

click engines is at **www.compareyourclicks.com.**

To read about how you can maximise your returns from pay-per-click engines, see **http://internetmarketingfocus.com/article.php?sid=53**. Here, you'll learn how to reduce your bids while still maintaining the same ranking or getting a top three position for maybe just a penny more.

How do I track clicks?

Once you've set up an account with one of the services, most of the time you'll notice that the number of clicks tracked by yourself is between 15% – 30% more than the clicks the pay-per-click engine reports.

This is because reputable pay-per-click engines like Overture have installed anti-cheating mechanisms that prevent your competitors from repeatedly clicking on your listings and wasting your bid fees.

They will count multiple clicks within a specified timeframe from the same computer as only one clickthrough while your own log will usually register the multiple clicks. This safeguards you, to some extent, against running through your money too quickly.

Tracking your clicks gives you a more reliable picture of how well your pay-per-click campaign is performing.

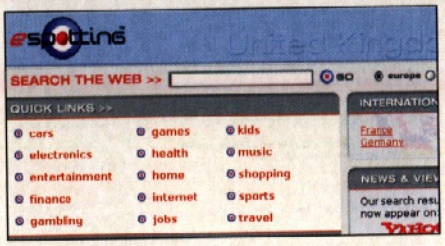
If you have access to your Web server's CGI directory, you can use LnkinLite, a small but powerful tracking software program that can track clicks to your site in the background. You can get it at **www.dtp-aus.com/cgiscript/lnkinlte.shtml**. Otherwise, you can consider free online trackers at **www.hypertracker.com** or **www.linkcounter.com.** ■

*Want to maximise your returns from pay-per-click advertising? Of course you do. So see **http://internetmarketingfocus.com***

Thanks to...

Thanks to Chee Wee, a professional Internet marketing consultant, who contributed to this feature. You can subscribe to his free marketing newsletter and get his free 215 page marketing book worth $19 at InternetMarketingFocus.com.

Top UK pay-per-click engines



Espotting

www.espotting.com

Espotting is a UK-based pay-per-click search engine. Your top five listings appear on Lycos and Hotbot UK and will reach 66% of the UK Internet population. You can start an account for £50.

Godado

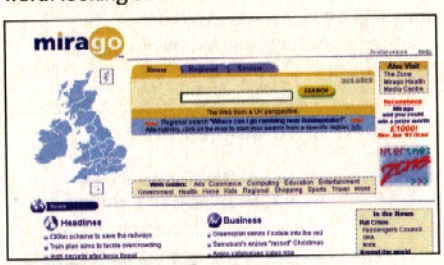
www.godado.co.uk

Godado allows you to promote your site in one or more European countries. Your site must be available in the language of the country you advertise in. You can start an account at Godado with £50.

GoTo UK

www.uk.goto.com

GoTo UK is a UK-based version of the popular GoTo model, now known as Overture. It's well worth looking at.



Mirago.co.uk

www.mirago.co.uk

Mirago is a pay-per-click search engine that only lists UK sites,. It has a minimum bid of 10p and you can start an account with £25.

Search2.co.uk

http://search2.co.uk

Search2.co.uk is a pay-per-click search engine with Meta search results from the top search engines. It costs £25 to open an account with a £10 added to new accounts. The bids start at 5p.

Splut

www.splut.com

Splut will only accept sites that would be of interest to the majority of UK people. There are to services to choose from – list your site free, or pay for a priority listing. Start an account with £50.

Turbo10

www.turbo10.com

Turbo10 doesn't list your bid amounts in the search results. Only other Turbo10 advertisers can see the bid amounts for keywords. You can start an account with £25.

UKFerret

http://ukferret.com/ferret/index.cgi

UKFerret allows you to be listed free under one search term if you place a UKFerret search box on your site. Your site will be checked daily to make sure you have the search box on your home page, if it isn't you will be permanently removed from the program. Positions are determined by the number of unique searches your search box generates.

UKSprite

www.uksprite.com

UKSprite is another UK-based pay-per-click search engine. It is new, still offering many keywords cheaply. Start an account with £10.

*Source: **www.payperclicksearchengines.com***

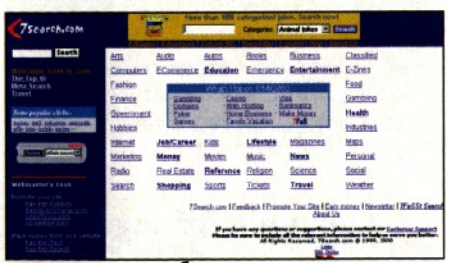
Ten of the best global pay-per-click search engines

1 Overture
www.overture.com

The king of pay-per-click search engines, Overture has a well organised system where you can bid for rankings and choose the description and title you want, which provides highly targeted traffic to your site. You can control your bids at all times and adjust them, based on the quality of your results. If you're in the top 10 at Overture, your link appears when someone searches using Dogpile's Meta search engine.

2 FindWhat
www.findwhat.com

Here, you bid on keywords or key phrases within search results. You pay only for clickthroughs to your site. The minimum amount needed to start an account is $25 and you can buy search terms cheaper than at Overture. It's worth noting, though, that FindWhat says it has more than 10 million searches every day – so it's still a big 'un. You can enter up to 1,000 keywords at once.



3 7 search
www.7search.com

Services offered to advertisers include immediate email notification when you are outbid for the top ranking on a keyword, a keyword generator tool, and a 1:1 banner exchange program.

4 Bay9
www.bay9.com

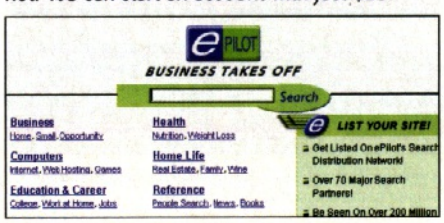
Bay9 boasts a high amount of traffic compared to most pay-per-click search engines. It has a good affiliate program that pays a recurring 20% on all referrals.

5 GoClick
www.goclick.com

GoClick is a vastly improving pay-per-click search engine. It has received record increases in traffic and continues to upgrade the account area. It has some of the best tools available to help you manage your keywords and to help you to find more relevant terms.

6 Kanoodle
www.kanoodle.com

Kanoodle has partnerships with sites such as, NetZero, DogPile, CNET, Metacrawler and Turbofind. You can choose whether you want to receive 'incentivied' clicks to your listings or not. You can start an account with just $25.

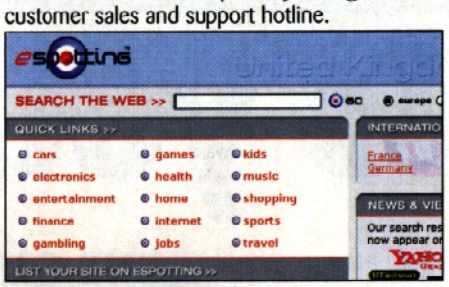


7 ePilot
www.epilot.com

ePilot's results are displayed on partners' sites such as NetZero, DogPile and InfoSpace and is therefore a search engine to consider. You can start an account with just $25.

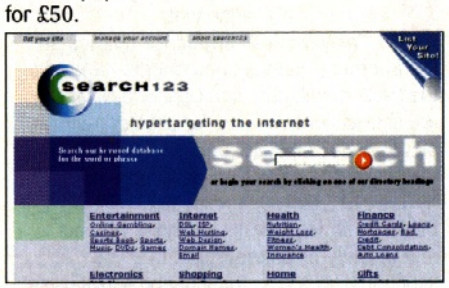
8 SearchGalore
www.searchgalore.com

SearchGalore offers lots of opportunities to buy very cheap search terms. You can start an account with as little as $25 and can receive up to an additional 30% deposit by calling its customer sales and support hotline.



9 Espotting
www.espotting.com

Espotting is a UK pay-per-click search engine. Your top five listings appear on Lycos and Hotbot UK and will reach 66% of the UK's Internet population. You can start an account for £50.



10 Search123
www.search123.com

Search123 has great tools to help you control your pay-per-click advertising budget. You can set a spend limit by the hour, day, week or month. You can start an account with $25 and continue making deposits as little as $5.

Source: www.paypercliksearchengines.com

Is your site legal?

JUNE CAMPBELL SHARES SOME ESSENTIAL ADVICE FOR LEGAL PROTECTION ON THE WEB

If you are like many small business operators, you have either made the move onto the Internet or you are seriously considering it.

Anyone with any sense realises that the Internet's various components – including the Web, email, chat and Usenet newsgroups – are all excellent vehicles for promoting your business, for making contacts, for networking, for generating sales leads and more.

However, great as the Net is, it can be fraught with legal perils for those who act unthinkingly or unknowingly. In some situations, laws governing online activities are clearly defined and reflect the laws that govern our activities in the real world.

In other cases, however, the Internet is still a grey area, and laws will be established through the outcomes of court cases.

Although situations differ, as do laws in various jurisdictions, the following tips might help you stay clear of trouble. Do remember, though, that these tips should not be construed as legal advice – consult with legal counsel for matters specific to your own situation. We're not going to be held responsible!

Domain sellers such as UK Reg (www.ukreg.com) let you buy domain names but pick the name carefully

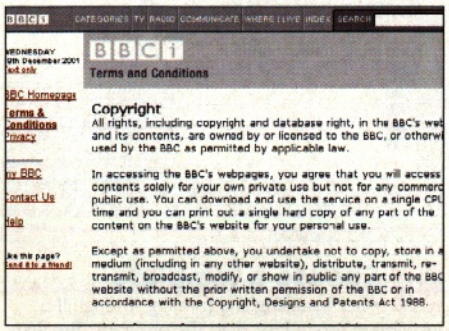
Pick the right name

Registering a domain name doesn't prevent legal challenges to your right to use that domain name. Many a Web site owner has been dismayed to hear from a company claiming his or her domain name is a trademark violation. To avoid problems in this area, conduct appropriate searches before registering, and consider registering your own domain name as a trademark. Businesses that register domain names can help you assess your options.

Copyright infringements

You risk copyright violation if you copy the content, graphics, layout, name, look or feel of another Web site without express permission. Several countries of the world, including Canada and the US, have signed an international copyright convention that protects copyright in member countries. If discovered in violation of copyright, your penalty could be as

small as being asked to remove the offending material to as large a penalty as a court might see fit to award.



Take note of the copyright rules of sites such as the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/terms) before you pinch images

You're liable for libel

If your Web site contains bulletin boards or chat rooms, you can be held liable for material posted by visitors to your site. To reduce the potential for problems, check your forums and chats regularly and remove any content that could create trouble. Material to watch for includes anything that could be considered libellous, promotes hate, could be considered adult content (and you do not have an adult site), could be perceived as threatening or harassing to others, promotes an illegal activity etc.

If you offer a bulletin board on your site such as the one here at ComputerVideo.net you need to check the content regularly

Make sure it's legal

Avoid advertising statements that would be illegal or prohibited in other media. Be particularly cautious if your site advertises alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, financial services, gambling, contests or adult entertainment. You may also find that selling or promoting these products is illegal in some countries around the world. Be very cautious and always double-check the situation before you get started.

Be wary of offering controversial goods such as tobacco (as here at www.web-site-gold.co.uk/cigarettes.html) from your site

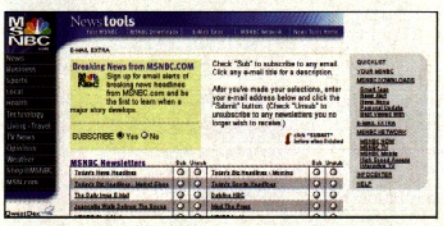
Be wary about linking

Most Web site owners welcome links to their site because links generate traffic and raise their standing with some search engines. Rarely will an owner complain if you link without permission. However, you are not entirely safe. Legal battles have been fought regarding unauthorized linking. To minimise your chances of running into trouble, avoid deep linking (ie make sure you link to the home page instead of to an inner page) and avoid capturing another Web site within your site's frames.

Ask the permission of sites you want to link to before you add them or you could risk legal disputes

Start an email policy

Create an Internet and email policy for your employees. If your employees are charged with sending harassing emails or distributing copyright MP3 files while at work, for example, you can be held responsible. Having a short email policy stating that your employees must use email in a legally responsible manner can go a long way to protecting you in case of problems.

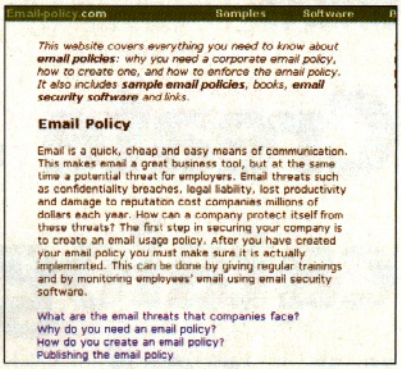


If you offer an email newsletter, make it clear what your policy on releasing the addresses to other parties is

About the author

The author June Campbell's writing has appeared in several international print and online publications. Her Web site (www.nightcats.com) offers a number of resources to small businesses, including guides for proposal writing, business plan development and more.

Your email policy



Get free samples of email policies and advice at www.email-policy.com

EMAIL IS A quick, cheap and easy means of communication. This makes email a great business tool, but at the same time a potential threat for employers.

Email threats such as confidentiality breaches, legal liability, lost productivity and damage to reputation cost companies millions of dollars each year. How can a company protect itself from these threats?

The first step in securing your company is to create an email usage policy. After you have created your email policy you must make sure it is actually implemented. This can be done by giving regular trainings and by monitoring employees' email using email security software.

Legal liability

In most cases the employer is held responsible for all the information transmitted on or from their systems. As a result, inappropriate emails can result in multi-million pound penalties. In the last few years there have been several high profile lawsuits such as the case against Norwich Union, which was forced to pay £450,000 in an out of court settlement after an employee sent an email stating that their competitor, Western Provident Association, was in financial difficulties.

In the US, petrol company Chevron settled a case filed by four female employees for $2.2 million. The employees alleged that sexually harassing emails sent through the company email system caused a threatening work environment. One of the sexually offensive messages was a 'joke' sheet titled '25 reasons why beer is better than women'. A company can also be liable if one of its employees sends an email containing a virus.

Find out more about why you need an email policy at **www.email-policy.com.**

In brief:

Task: Create a product catalogue
Software I need: NetShop Lite
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

ON THE CD

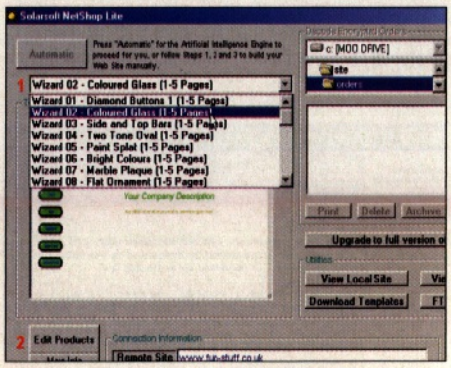
Create a Web catalogue using NetShop Lite

BUILD A WEB SITE TO ADVERTISE YOUR SHOP'S PRODUCT RANGE

FOR ALL ITS potential rewards, selling your wares on the Web isn't necessarily a viable proposition for some companies, especially those already operating in the physical world.

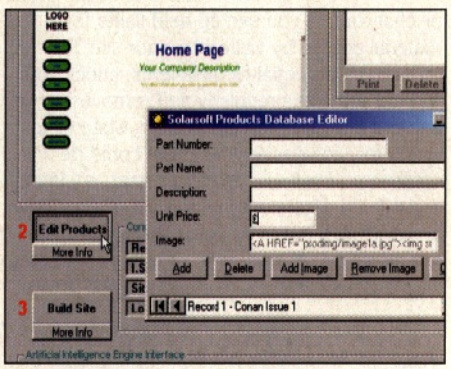
But to dismiss the Net entirely would be a mistake, as an online presence can still attract lots of new customers. An effective way of grabbing new business is to post your entire catalogue. That way, visitors can see what goods you sell, and decide whether they want to off-load some lucre in your direction.

It's also a great way to keep existing customers informed of any changes to your catalogue. Rather than spend lots of money posting mailouts, you can just send a quick email to customers, directing them to your newly updated Web site. NetShop Lite (a trial version of which you'll find on this issue's CD) is the cut-down version of its fully eCommerce enabled program, but still offers many of its features, except the online ordering facility. With it, you can quickly put together a catalogue, either to form the basis of a site, or as an extension to one that exists already. You can then upgrade from the lite to the full version and start selling online...



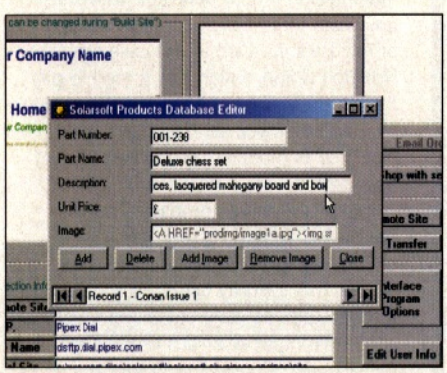
1 Choose a template

After installing and running through the installation procedure, start the program. The first thing to do is pick a template from the list in the pull-down menu. A preview will appear in the panel below.



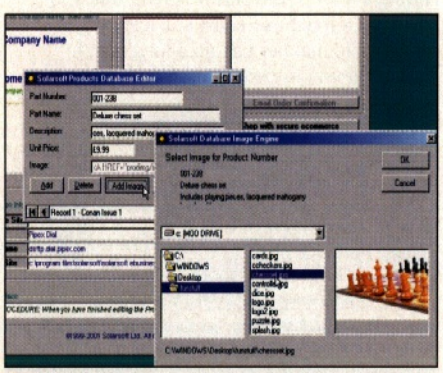
2 Open the database

That's all you need to do with regards to your shop layout, so you can move onto the next section and build your catalogue. Press the 'Edit Products' button. In the dialog box, choose a method to sort your products and press 'OK'



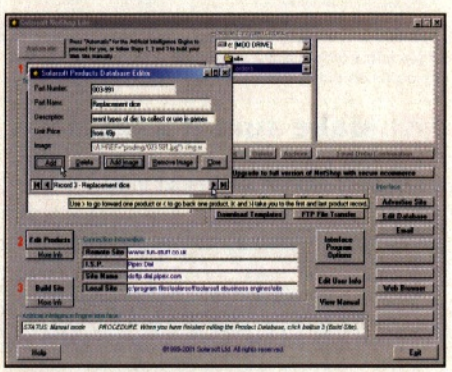
3 Product summary

In the 'Database Editor' dialog box, enter a part code (if applicable, else leave it as '1'), and the name for your product. Underneath this, type a brief description. You only have 64 characters available, so try to be as succinct as possible.



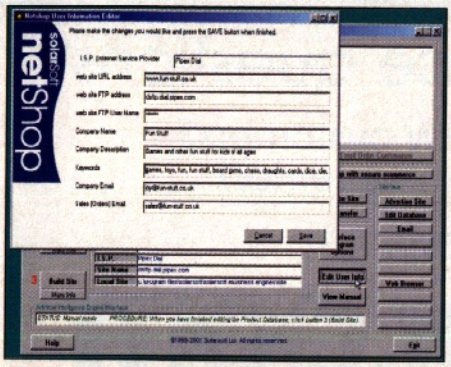
4 Prices and pictures

Enter the price of the product in the box below and press 'Add Image' to open the Image Engine. Using the File Selector, browse the directories. Click an image to see a preview, then press 'OK' to load it.



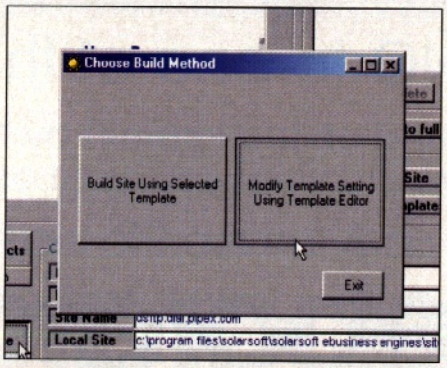
5 Shelf filling

Press the right arrow button to move to the next field. If there are no other fields currently available in the database, click on the 'Add' button. Now, following the directions in the previous two steps, add the remainder of your shop's products.



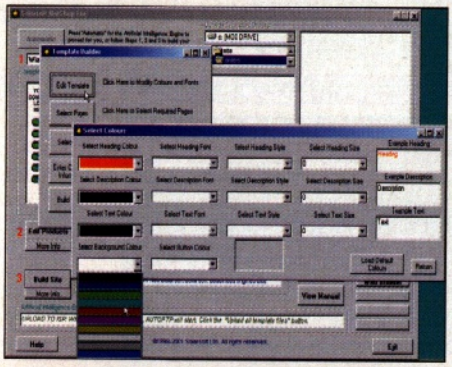
6 It's in the details

After you've added all of your products, click 'Close', then 'Edit User Info'. This opens the 'User Information Editor', where you can check or modify your shop's particulars, and the technical details for your Web space. Press 'Save' to store changes.



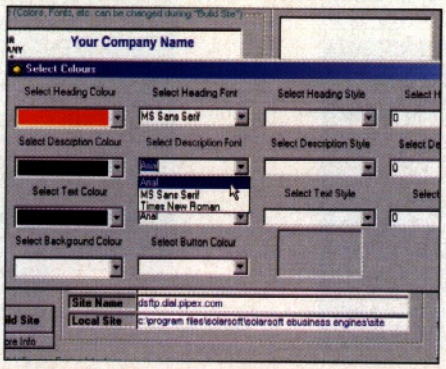
7 Edit the template

With all the information compiled, start constructing the actual site. Press the 'Build Site' button. You now have two options: to build the site using the template, or to modify the appearance using the 'Template Editor'. Choose the latter.



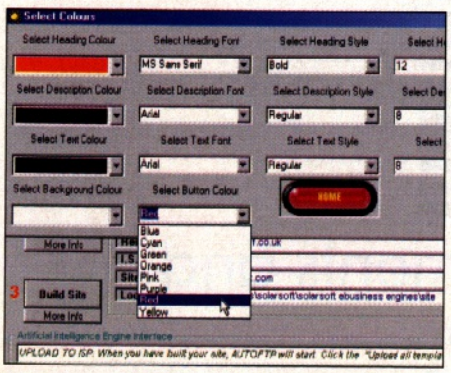
8 Send in the decorators

Now start to customise the look of your catalogue. To choose a new colour scheme, press 'Edit Template'. Use the first four pull-down menus on the left-hand side to choose colours for the text and background.



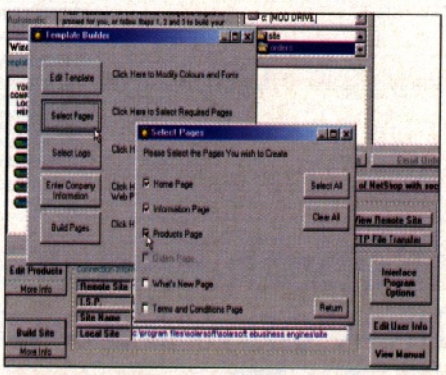
9 Text with style

Select the typeface and font size for the headings, product descriptions and body text (previews appear in a panel on the right of the dialog box). Only Web-safe fonts are available, so your shop will be seen regardless of browser.



10 Modify your buttons

There are eight varieties of colour schemes to choose from for the buttons, too. Use the pull-down menu to select a scheme, which you'll be able to see in the preview. Once you've finished picking your colour schemes, press 'Return'.



11 Picking pages

Press 'Select Pages' to choose which sections to include on your site. If you're using NetShop to build a catalogue for an existing site, check the 'Products Page' box. Otherwise, select all the pages for your new site, and press 'Return'.

Jargon Buster

FTP

Short for File Transfer Protocol, this is the term used to describe the process of moving files to and from your computer to a remote server, usually your Web space. File Transfer Protocol is the chosen method for uploading your Web site, although it is also frequently used to access software archives.

Thumbnail image

A miniature-sized preview version of a larger picture. Thumbnails are used on the Web in catalogue pages, where many product images can be loaded quickly, and in a confined space. NetShop automatically creates thumbnail versions of your products, and links these to the original, larger images.

BMP

A Bitmap, or Windows Bitmap, is a commonly used image format on the PC – however it isn't as widely supported on the Web as JPEGs or GIFs. This is because BMP files tend to be far greater in file size (owing to the fact that the chosen method of compression, if it's used at all, isn't as efficient as a JPEG or GIF), and hence will take far longer to download.

Meta tag

These tags sit in the invisible header part of a Web page. Their purpose is to describe the page's content to search engines and the like.

HTML tag

Standing for HyperText Mark-up Language, this is the nuts and bolts of a Web page. It informs the browser how to lay out the various elements on a page, such as aligning and formatting text, as well as how forms and tables should be constructed.

Web-safe font

There are a number of different typefaces that are available on every computer. In terms of Web design, these are designated as Web-safe because, if you specify these types in your design, you can be assured that your pages will look the same in every browser. Fonts included in this elite set are: Times, Arial, Courier, Comic Sans, Helvetica and Trebuchet.

World Markets
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Members
Users

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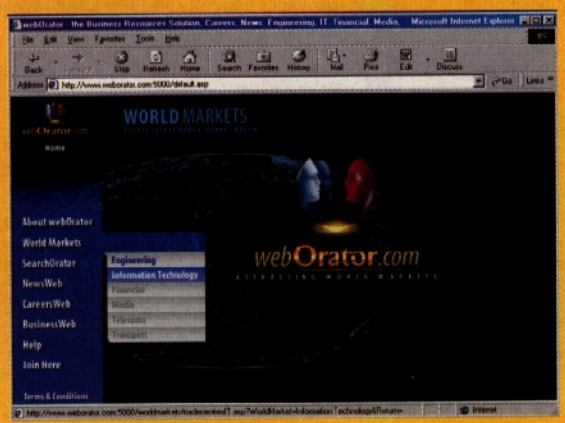
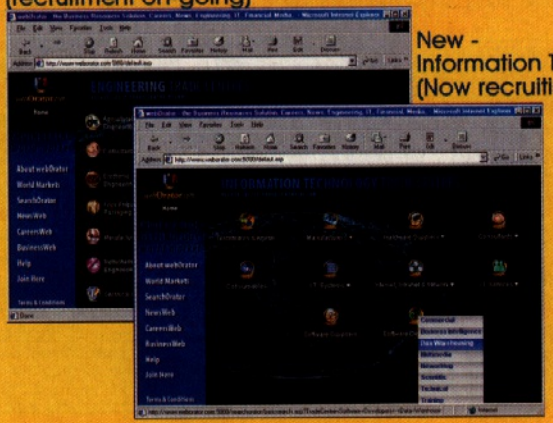
The definative source of Company information for purchasers.



Click No. 1
Choose World Market

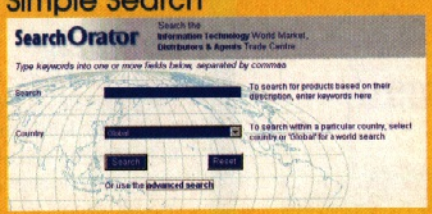
Engineering
(recruitment on-going)



New -
Information Technology
(Now recruiting)

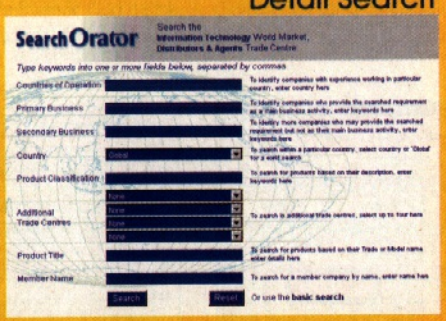
Click No. 2
Choose a Trade Centre

Simple Search



OR

Detail Search

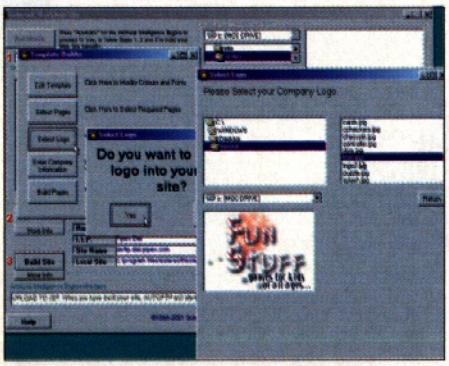


Type in your Search Requirements and Click on - Search

Get Results

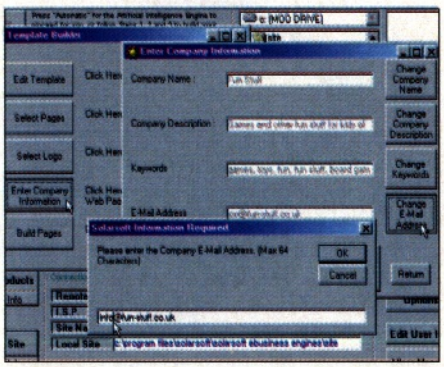
Up to 12 Pages of detailed and structured information about each Member Company.
Industry standard pre-qualification format for information.
Review and Contact suppliers with confidence.

WebOrator - Setting the standards for Business Information on the Internet.



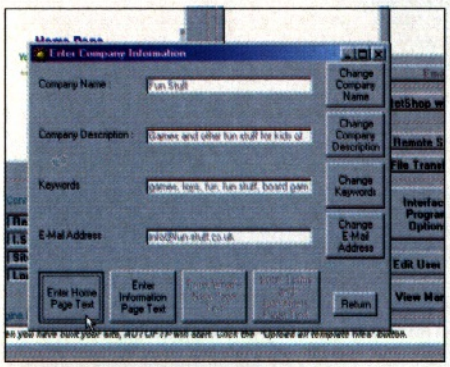
12 Show me the logo

To add a logo, click the 'Company Logo' button, and press 'Yes' to confirm. Just as when you were inserting product images into the database, use the File Selector to browse your folders to find your picture. Highlight it and press 'Return'.



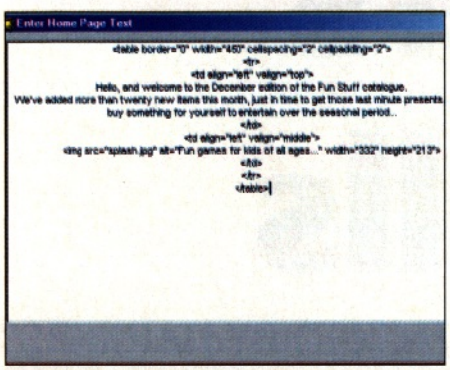
13 Change company

Now add the material to appear on the ancillary pages. Click the 'Company Information' button. To change the name, email address, or the description and keywords used for meta tags, press the appropriate button and replace the text.



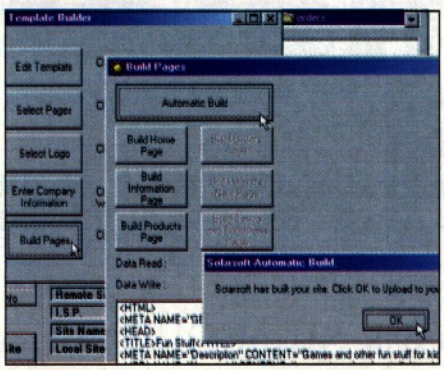
14 Edit the content

Along the bottom of the 'Enter Company Information' dialog box are four buttons, one for each of the supplementary pages. If you opted to have one of theses pages in your site, the button will be enabled. Press it to open the text editor.



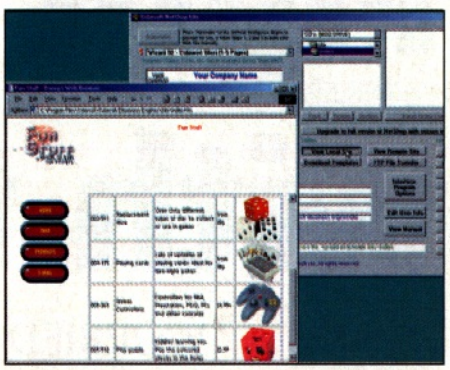
15 Fill in the blanks

In the Edit window, enter your text for that page (it will be formatted as per the 'Text Style' settings you made in step nine). The text editor will also accept HTML tags, so you can insert elements such as graphics, tables or links to the page.



16 Bricks and mortar

Press 'Return' after editing the page content and return to the 'Template Builder' dialog box. Finally, press the 'Build Pages' button. NetShop gives you the option to build individual pages, or the whole site. For now, press 'Automatic Build'.



17 Check out the checkout

After building the pages, NetShop will try to connect to the Net to begin uploading the site. However, it's a good idea to test it first, so press 'Cancel' in the 'FTP Login' dialog to return to the main window and press the 'View Local Site' button.

18 Grand opening

To make changes, repeat the previous steps then press the 'FTP File Transfer' button. Enter your password into the dialog and press 'OK' to connect to the Net. Select all the files in the left-hand panel and press 'Transfer File to Remote'.

19 Advertise it

NetShop has a feature for submitting your site to search engines. In the main program window, press 'Advertise Site' to be taken to the SolarSoft Web site. Fill in the form, choose your engines and then press the 'Submit' button.

Top Tip!

NETSHOP COMES WITH 30 built-in templates for your site. If you have bought and registered your copy, you can download more templates for free. To do this, press the 'Download Templates' button in the main program. You will be taken to the SolarSoft Web site where you'll see a form. Enter your name, email and product registration number. Press 'Submit'. You'll be emailed info on how to obtain new, free templates for use in both the Lite and full version of NetShop. Copy your downloaded templates into the C:\Program Files\Solarsoft\Solarsoft Ebusiness Engines\ Templates folder.

Fight hackers with firewalls

WORRIED YOUR SITE COULD BE ATTACKED BY HACKERS? **DAVID ANGELL** EXPLAINS HOW FIREWALLS CAN OFFER PROTECTION

Security is the soft white underbelly of broadband Internet service and the threats are very real. The 2000 Computer Crime and Security Survey (FBI/Computer Security Institute) found that 71 per cent of companies report being attacked by hackers.

Hackers breaking into your network can view, alter, or destroy private files, and then leave as quickly as they came. Often, the break-in and changes going undetected until it's too late. Denial-of-services (DoS) attacks can disable a service or network so users no longer have access. To make security problems worse, the tools available to hackers today are more powerful and easier to use than ever before. Hackers no longer need to be skilled in attacking networks because user-friendly hacking programs are readily available.

The mantra of Internet security is minimising unsolicited inbound connections. A firewall acts like a bouncer that separates your network from the Internet. It will inspect data packets as they arrive at either side of the firewall – inbound or outbound – to determine whether they should be allowed to pass.

What a firewall does

TCP/IP, or Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, is the lingua franca of the Internet, but unfortunately its open protocols present some security problems. Messages broken down into packets that include data, application identifiers, and the unique IP (Internet Protocol) addresses of the source and destination computers are sent unprotected along the Internet.

A firewall sits between your network and the Internet to provide a first line of defence against TCP/IP-borne attacks. However, you'll also need to address other security threats if you want a truly comprehensive security plan. Using a firewall in conjunction with other security measures will provide a complete security solution. These can range from network antivirus and virtual private networks for secure remote access

Firewalls read IP addresses in data packets to check that it is coming from a trusted source. A firewall also guards TCP/IP entry points called ports. Each port has a unique number, and each port allows computers to exchange information related to a specific application. Applications are identified in TCP/IP by the ports they use. For example, the World Wide Web uses port 80. FTP uses port 21, and email uses port 25.

Hackers, using programs called port scanners, try to find services running on the computer to determine whether or not that specific service is vulnerable to attack. Firewalls keep an eye on each of TCP/IP's 65,535 ports to prevent unauthorized access to a network from any of these ports.

Firewall types

Firewalls differ in their architecture and features. The key differences between firewalls are the

Employ a firewall such as SonicWALL (www.sonicwall.com) to protect your business

amount and quality of information used to make decisions. Firewall functions are implemented in dedicated hardware, applications running inside routers, or as a service running on a server. The leading firewall technologies available today include packet filter, application-level proxy, and stateful packet inspection.

Packet filter firewalls

Packet filter firewalls provide only minimal network access. They scan a packet to determine where it originated, based on the IP address. This limited filtering makes packet filter firewalls easier to circumvent using IP spoofing, where an attacker masquerades as a trusted IP address to gain access. Some protocols, such as FTP and DNS, can't be safely passed through packet filter firewalls. This is because those protocols require 'holes' in the firewall through IP ports that can't be filtered in a packet filter firewall, which also compromises security. Many broadband router vendors claim their routers include a firewall because they include packet filtering and a feature called NAT (Network Address Translation). Although NAT offers some protection by hiding computers from the Internet, by itself it's not a firewall. Even when NAT is combined with packet filtering, these routers can't protect a network against TCP/IP-borne attacks such as IP Spoofing and Denial of Service attacks.

FIREWALLS DIFFER IN THEIR ARCHITECTURE AND FEATURES

Application-level proxy firewalls

These types of firewall protect the network by checking to see if the application generating the packet has originated from a known and trusted application. It accepts or rejects data based on an entire set of IP packets associated with an entire application session to the same IP address. For example, a Web browser generates multiple data packets as it requests files from various parts of the Internet, which are all part of the larger application session. Unfortunately, this upper level examination requires a great deal of processing power and often leads to a reduction in Internet connection performance. These firewalls also include a proxy server that protects the network by acting as a middleman standing between the computers on a LAN and the Internet. The computers behind the proxy server are protected from view because outside sources never make direct contact with the computers – all communication is conducted through the proxy server. However, each application type requires the installation and configuration of a different application proxy, making support for new applications a problem. Application-level proxy firewalls also require the user to reconfigure their network settings to support the proxy.

Application-level proxy firewalls typically install on a computer that acts as the firewall for the network, which can weaken the firewall's effectiveness because of the potential security vulnerabilities of the computer's operating system. The bottom line of application-level proxy firewalls is that while they offer good security, they are demanding to install and manage.

Stateful packet inspection firewalls

These use sophisticated technology that provides easy-to-use, robust security at considerably faster rates than application-level proxy firewalls. They allow incoming data from the Internet only if it's part of a session initiated by one of the users on the secure network side. This ensures that all communications initiated by the recipient computer are taking place only with sources that are known and trusted from previous interactions. Beyond the rigorous inspection of packets, these firewalls keep tight control on port openings to minimise potential security breaches. Stateful inspection firewalls close off ports until a connection to the specified port is requested, which adds a layer of protection against port scanning. Stateful packet inspection firewalls are typically embodied in security appliances, which are integrated, solid-state security devices. The key benefits of Internet security appliances are they handle all the security processing functions for an entire network, they're easy to install and manage, and they enable easy integration of additional security services for the network, such as anti virus and VPN for secure remote access.

The bottom line is any organisation needs to incorporate a firewall into any broadband Internet service implementation. Leaving a network exposed with little or no firewall protection can burn your organisation with stolen or destroyed data, or a shut down of critical operations. Choosing the right firewall lays a solid foundation for protecting your network and business from Internet security threats.

About the author

David Angell is the author of *DSL For Dummies* and is the Sr. End User Marketing Manager at SonicWALL Inc (www.sonicwall.com), a leading provider of integrated, comprehensive Internet security solutions for government, education, small and medium business, and enterprise markets.

The company will be an exhibitor at Infosecurity Europe, 23-25 April 2002, National Hall, Olympia, London, UK (www.infosec.co.uk). Tel: 020 8910 7931 or email: infosecurity@reedexpo.co.uk for more information. Infosecurity Europe is Europe's largest IT Security Event. The show features a comprehensive range of FREE seminars and Keynote Sessions on the hottest information security topics as well as hosting the largest gathering of information security vendors and new products in Europe.

Protect yourself

SOME ONLINE GAMERS readily complain that not enough of their employers allow them to play games such as Quake III over the Internet because of security issues.

Allen Cronce, President of PACE Anti-Piracy (**www.paceap.com**), isn't one of those employers – because he knows his company is protected from attacks by using a SonicWALL (**www.sonicwall.com**) firewall.

"We've been using SonicWALL firewalls to protect our corporate network for almost two years now," he says. "Over the past couple of weeks, we've been attacked five times."

All of the attacks, Cronce reports, came during "or shortly after periods where our employees have been playing Quake III over the Internet."

Talk about an underhanded way to win a game. Cronce and his employees concluded that unscrupulous Quake players were using Pings of Death to "freeze" other players, thereby racking up points on their newly immobilised competition.

If video game cheating were the only problem, Cronce might not have been so concerned. But, armed with the IP addresses of machines on the PACE network, the unscrupulous players have launched attacks ranging from Sub-Seven and NETBUS attacks to port scans looking for vulnerable machines on the PACE network.

SonicWALL has proven to be the clear winner. Cronce's staff have been able to use the SonicWALL logs and trace routes to discover which ISPs the hackers used to get online. They have then informed those ISPs of the attackers, causing them to have their accounts suspended.

Cronce and PACE opted for the SonicWALL despite the fact that many DSL routers, including the one at PACE, have built-in firewalling functions. "We wanted security separate from our router," Cronce explains. As local DSL connection options improve and new technology makes upgrading the DSL router feasible (likely from a different router manufacturer), PACE doesn't want to have to "learn a whole new way of protecting the network." With SonicWALL, Cronce can "keep the company's security infrastructure static."

TEN STEPS TO

Dispatching customer orders

WITH YOUR ECOMMERCE SITE OPERATIONAL AND ORDERS COMING IN, IT'S TIME TO SEND CUSTOMERS THEIR PRODUCTS. **KEVIN GRUMBALL** OF ECOMMERCE SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, ACTINIC, EXPLAINS WHAT'S REQUIRED...

If you want to get rich from the growth of the Internet at minimum risk, you'll be wise to invest in a carrier company like DHL or TNT. The growth of eCommerce has greatly improved their business prospects.

People who buy in a hurry expect the goods to be delivered in a hurry, too. This is great for intangible products like music, software and pornography where delivery can be made electronically. It's harder when you have physical goods to be shipped to the customer.

Distribution is an area where bricks and mortar companies may have an edge. If you already have a warehouse and you already make mail order sales, you're better placed than a pure dot com company which only has a Web site.

Remote selling has the same basic problems whether you take the order electronically or by carrier pigeon – you need to establish trust. After all, the customer can't look around your premises and see how you store goods, what condition they're in, or whether your staff frequently play frisbee with CDs.

In a physical store, you can chat to the owner and look around. If you can see what you want on a shelf, you know that it's in stock and in good condition before you hand over your cash.

As a merchant, you need to be clear with your customers what you offer and then live by it. If you outsource, be aware that you can't outsource responsibility – buyers don't care why you've failed or whose fault it is. All they care about is getting what they've bought. So here are ten tips for making a success of your distribution strategy.

1 Manage customer expectations

In an e-store, you need to make sure that customers know exactly what they're getting and when. If Amazon tells you that a book 'normally ships in 2-3 days', you aren't too upset if it takes four days. If you offer '24 hour delivery', when do the 24 hours start? You need to be clear about any time cut-offs, so include a note along the lines of 'Orders received by 4pm normally ship the same day'. That way there can be no quibbles.

2 No surprises for the customer

Make sure that you calculate shipping charges as part of the whole deal. You may need to charge by weight, by volume or by value of order. If you offer free shipping on orders over a certain value, make it clear whether that value includes VAT.

About the author

This article was provided by Actinic, the eCommerce software developer. See www.actinic.co.uk for more details or call 01932 871000.

3 Living with back orders

Back orders are a fact of life if you accept fax or mail order, and they are also present in Internet selling. Only charge shipping once – it's irritating being charged extra shipping when it's the merchant's fault that the item isn't in stock. Make it clear on the site how you'll deal with it. Allow the buyer the choice of waiting for a complete shipment or taking part-orders.

4 Give plenty of feedback

Placing an Internet order feels risky for the buyer. Make sure your buyers are told that you've received the order and keep them up-to-date on the progress of that order. If you have to make a back order, let the buyer know when the rest of the order is expected.

5 Pick a reliable carrier

There are lots of carriers and they all compete heavily for your custom. It's best to value reliability over price. A lost buyer will probably cost you more than the price difference between two carriers. Pick a carrier than can track goods online. Give the tracking reference to your customer as part of the order processing feedback. Monitor the performance of your carriers.

6 Be clear about returns and guarantees

Sadly, some of your sales will come back to you. Some may be your fault but others may be beyond your control. Publish your returns policy and include it as part of the ordering process at the Web site. Work out who pays for return carriage – if it's you then make sure your carrier can collect.

7 Say what you mean and mean what you say

Don't promise too much. Repeat customers are much more valuable than one-off ones. Make it clear when you'll deliver and then stick to it – even if it costs you more. Customers appreciate merchants who go out of their way to meet their commitments. A happy customer will tell his/her friends, but an unhappy one will tell everybody who'll listen.

8 Selling overseas

There are all sorts of pitfalls to exporting. Who is responsible for any duty or taxes on the goods? The recent EU Directive is setting out a legal framework for shipping within the EU. Most large carriers can collect duty on goods when they arrive but you need to be sure who's going to pick up the tab.

8 Will your customer be in when it arrives?

Customers usually have to go to work, so there may be problems in receiving your goods. Many companies are experimenting with deliveries to workplaces or to known drop-off points like petrol service stations. If you can offer this service, make sure that you can deal with goods that may 'go missing' en-route.

10 Can you outsource it all?

Outsourcing – letting a warehousing company store and ship the goods – can be helpful. However, make sure that it's clear who bears the risk of stock in the warehouse, both for fire and theft. If the warehouse contents vanish, who's left with the bill? If rats nibble your CDs, who pays? Check you're properly insured if it's your risk. Insure it anyway if it's theirs, just in case they haven't paid their premiums. Check on their performance – it's your reputation at stake.

Web resources

DHL
www.dhl.co.uk

TNT
www.tnt.co.uk

FedEx
www.federalexpress.com/gb

Parcelforce
www.parcelforce.com/ecommerce

Donate As You Surf

with our new range of unbeatable internet packages

Wouldn't you love to be able to donate money to the charity of your choice every time you surf the Internet or collect your e-mail, without it costing you an extra penny? With CharityDays you can do just that and 'Donate As You Surf'.

Our range of 15 unbeatable packages are some of the best available in the UK today. They cover Pay As You Go, Subscription, Fixed Access and ADSL Broadband accounts for both home and business users. All with the added benefit that 60% of our telecomms revenue and subscription profits go directly to charity and it takes just seconds to join.

So do your bit for charity now and help yourself to some of the most feature packed and cost effective Internet products on the market today.

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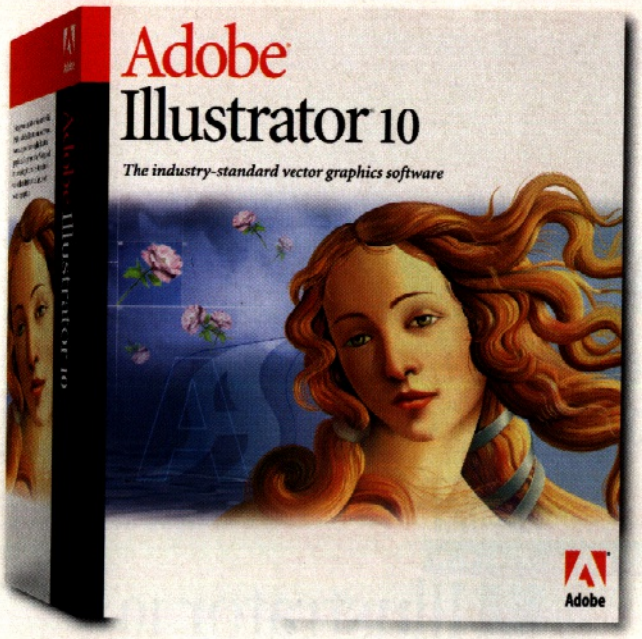
www.charitydays.net
or call 0845 1400024

CharityDAYS
Donate As You Surf

Reviews

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO NEW HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE FOR INTERNET USERS



Adobe Illustrator 10

Rob Clymo looks at the latest incarnation of the definitive illustration package on page 128

FujiFilm FinePix 2800Zoom

This cam packs a load of quality into its chunky facade. See page 134

Welcome...

FOR YEARS, ADOBE Illustrator was thought of as a professional designer's package. Version 10, however, finally makes it easy for anyone to pick up and use.

Likewise, feature-heavy digital cameras used to cost an arm and a leg, but the FinePix 2800Z is an example of the new breed of inexpensive mid-range cameras.

If you've ever had to throw away a CD because of scratches, check out the Skip Doctor review, and find out how you can bring your favourite CDs back to life. We've also got some great speakers and music software to keep you entertained.

James Thornton, Staff Writer

On test this issue...

VideoWave 5.0

Produce and edit your own movies then share them with your buddies online 132

Actinic Catalog 5

Turn your e-business dreams into a reality with this online catalogue builder 132

ez-mixer

Transform your MP3 collection into a mix a pro DJ would be proud of 133

Norton Ghost 2002

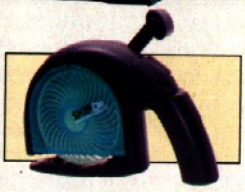
Back your system up a treat with this restore tool 133

Waitec Caddy 24

Taking decent digital snaps has never been easier thanks to this robust digicam 136

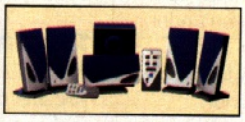
Photosmart 1315

Develop photographs in your own home with this smart digital photo printer 136



Skip Doctor

Eradicate the frustration of damaged CDs with this scratch-repairing disc saviour 137



Easysound S7

These great surround sound speakers let you enjoy dynamic audio on your PC 137

Our reviewing system

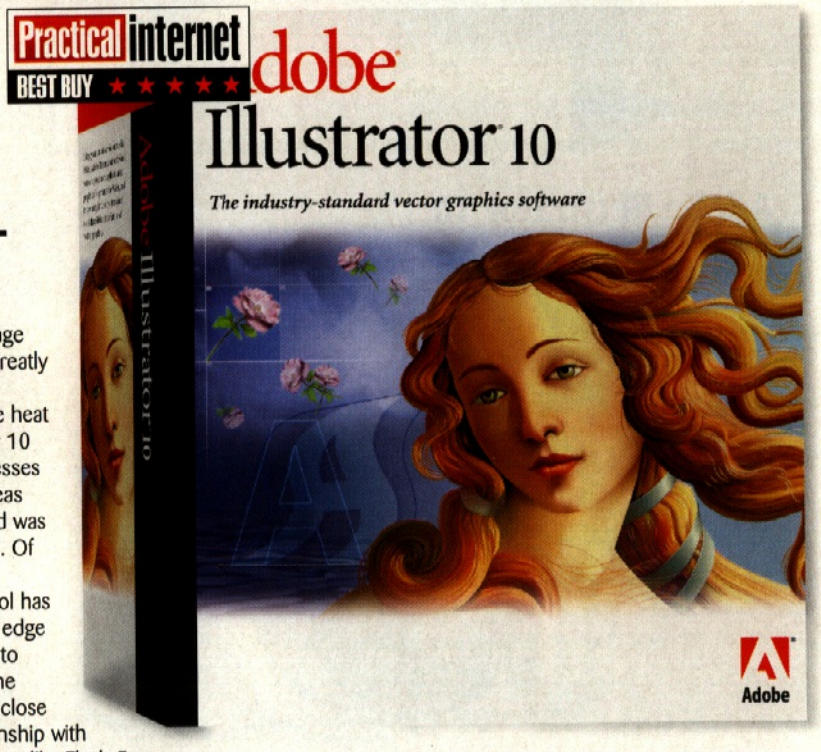
Look out for the 'Best Buy' logo. This cherished accolade is only awarded to the highest-scoring products

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Adobe Illustrator 10

THE DEFINITIVE GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION PACKAGE HAS JUST UNDERGONE A REVAMP. **ROB CLYMO** DISCOVERS WHAT'S ON OFFER

Program: Adobe Illustrator 10
URL: www.adobe.com
Type: Graphic illustration software
File size: 180Mb of hard drive space required
OS: **Windows** 98, 98 SE, 98 ME, 2000 with service pack 2, XP / **Mac** OS9.1, 9.2, OSX 10.1
Cost: £386.58
Contact: Adobe



Anyone who's ever had any dealing with the print or graphic design industry will have come across Illustrator in one form or another. Software giant Adobe set a precedent with the package, although thankfully it has become a lot easier to live with in recent incarnations. Anyone who can remember early versions will know how finicky it could be. It's certainly become less of a snobs' illustration program and now sits very comfortably in a variety of design environments. Of course, the emergence of the Web has been one of the big reasons why Illustrator has moved on – it's been forced to. Indeed, there has always been a feud with it's main opponent in this field – Macromedia's Freehand package.

Tool of the trade

Now, if we were to ask some graphic designers which of the two was the better package, it's highly likely that at least a couple would swear blind that Freehand was the winner. It's highly likely, though, that anyone spouting the virtues of Freehand have never had to worry about getting beautiful works of art to print. In this scenario, Illustrator has always had the edge when it comes to outputting Postscript documents. Freehand would simply throw up errors all the time. Yup, if Illustrator won't print your document then nothing will. But then, that's not really surprising because Adobe Systems developed the whole Postscript language that went on to revolutionise the print industry. You wouldn't really expect any less.

Now the chances are that if you ask someone in the know, like a Reprographics expert, they'll probably tell you much the same thing. Nevertheless, Macromedia's Freehand package has improved greatly and Adobe has realised that the heat is on. Illustrator 10 therefore addresses some of the areas where Freehand was creeping ahead. Of course, that Macromedia tool has had the overall edge when it comes to designing for the Web due to its close working relationship with its other products like Flash 5 and Dreamweaver 4. Realising this, Adobe has strengthened the Web features contained in Illustrator. The result is that what used to seem like nailed on tools, now feel as though they're tailor-made for the program. For example, the including of Symbols and the ability to export as a SWF file is now a much more straightforward process, while the Scalable Vector Graphics format gives untold design and development ability.

Revamped interface

As we've already mentioned, Illustrator has become much more user-friendly as it's matured. Version 10 is no exception. You will still need to spend a good deal of time learning and working with the tools here, although there are quite a few that you will either never actually need, or want to use. But for more common tasks, the tools are easily grasped and can be customised in all manner of ways to suit your own individual requirements. Object-based slicing means that creating optimised Web graphics from sliced up vector art is a joy. The latest distortion tools also allow incredible control over illustration jobs. For the more advanced Web designer, you'll now find the ability to integrate scripts and coding into your projects. This is complex but undeniably impressive inclusion.

Cutting edge

Some of the new tools here also add an exciting edge to proceedings. Using a Mac armed with plenty of memory, you can instantly distort, warp or liquefy your work thanks to the latest selection of tools. The symbols aspect is also a real boon and with

practice, can prove a major help in the creative process. You'll also find four new tools for drawing – lines, arcs, grids and polar grids are all now available.

The Flare tool, meanwhile, is excellent for creating reflections and lens flare effects that are usually only found within the Photoshop domain. Elsewhere, the ability to use transparency alongside masks promises much and delivers a whole host of new design possibilities. This becomes especially true when they're harnessed with Illustrator's high-end drawing tools.

Speed of light

Illustrator 10 certainly goes a lot further in speeding up productivity. With its data-driven graphics process, it allows you to generate multiple versions of your design. Performance also feels that much more solid and there's now full support for Mac OSX and Windows platforms. The improved scripting area of the program also helps ease the strain when it comes to those repetitive design chores that seem to haunt designers. There is also much more integration with other Adobe products, most notably Photoshop. It's now possible to retain compound path values between the two programs and rollover and animation is also kept constant if you're swapping files between the pair.

Ten out of ten?

All in all, Illustrator 10 packs a mean punch. There are few other computer software programs that offer such a dizzying array of tools for the job. True graphic designers will immediately love the enhanced tools and new features nestling in this latest version. However, where Illustrator has dramatically improved is its usability. Even design beginners should be able to grasp at least the basic concepts behind this program plus the integration between print and Web is now second to none.

If you spent time using, say, version 3 of Illustrator you'll doubtless agree that it's come along way. It's hardly a budget solution to your design needs, but if you need a professional tool then you're going to have to pay a professional price.

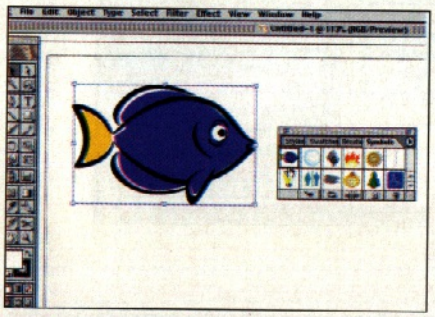
Verdict

What's good:
This version is the most user-friendly, excellent integration

What's bad:
Still a bit pricey for most

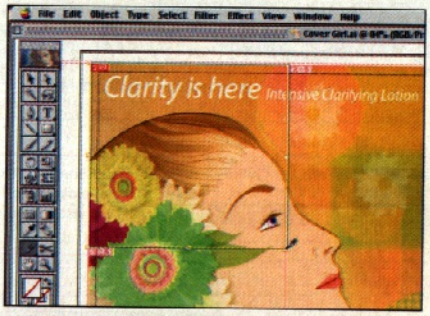
Overall: ★★★★★

Get to grips with Illustrator's new features



1 Create Flash-style Symbols

With the latest version of Illustrator its now possible to create a master graphic and then save it as a symbol. In a similar way to Macromedia's Flash, every instance of the symbol that create references a single definition.

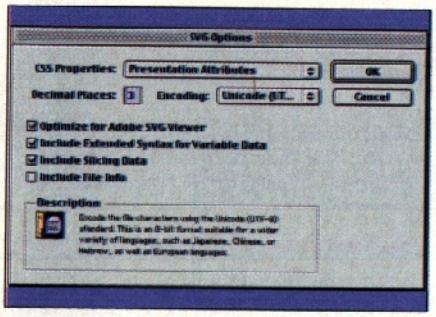


2 Vector and raster slicing

The software also gives you the ability to create both vector and raster-based slicing. Combining this with the complex drawing tools, you are immediately armed with everything you need to create complex Web pages.

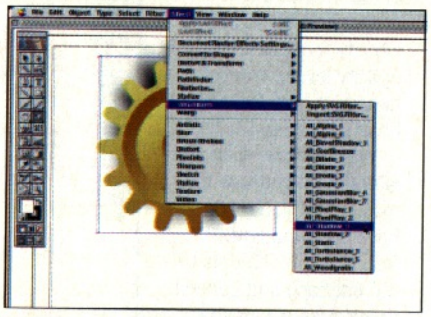
3 Slice by slice optimization

Illustrator 10 also gives you further scope by allowing individual slice optimisation. This means that you can apply varying degrees of compression and format settings to any one slice at a time.



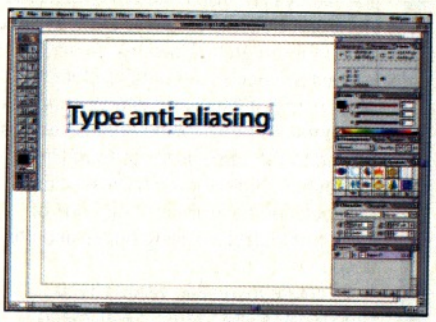
4 SVG import and export

This is perfect for saving your vector-based graphics. The added flexibility of this file type is that you have multiple options available when it comes to deciding on whether or not to embed fonts and images.



5 Editable SVG effects

Illustrator 10 new offers a full array of live SVG effects, which effectively allow you to add extra touches like complex drop-shadows, Gaussian-blurs and the like to your files, as you create them.



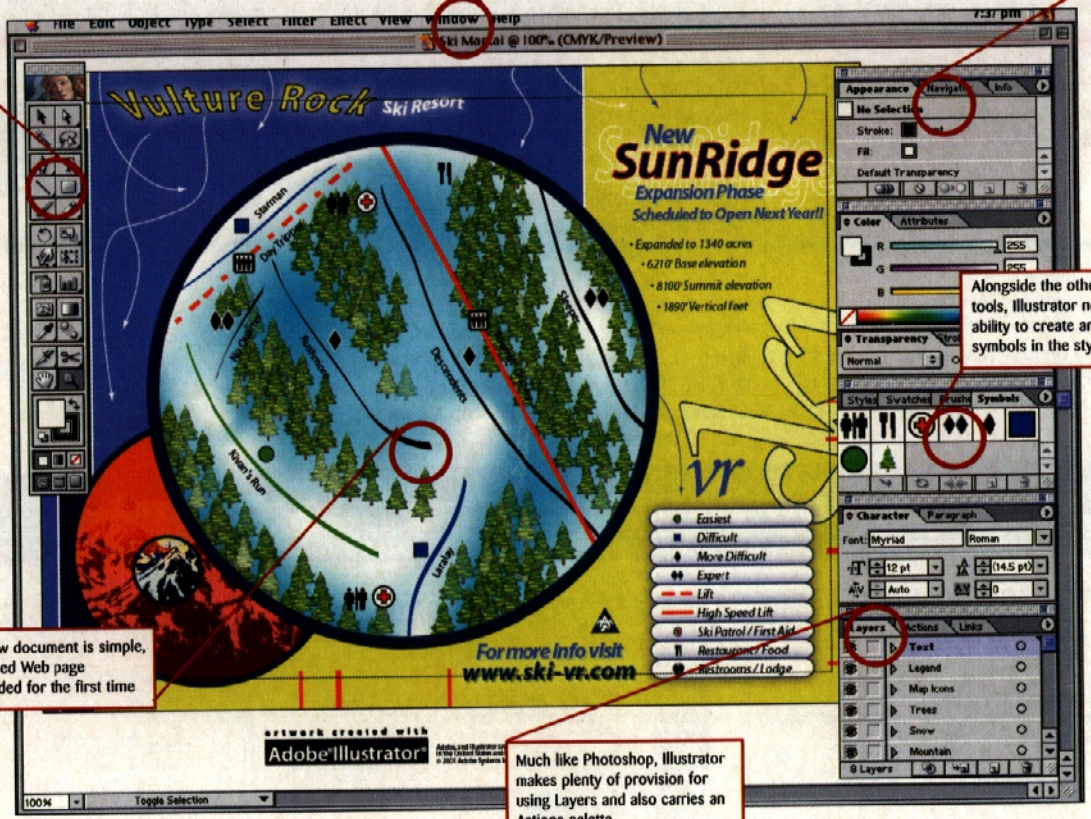
6 Type anti-aliasing

The software has always been well known for its more than capable handling of text and associated effects. Version 10 allows even more manipulation of your characters and there is also the facility to anti-alias very small text for clarity.

The main toolbar has had a facelift and now sports colour tool icons plus additional new features

The main menu is jam packed with the usual bumper crop of tools, filters and other visual effects

Those familiar with the Illustrator package will immediately notice the comprehensive tool palettes that sit alongside the work area



Alongside the other usual visual tools, Illustrator now sports the ability to create and use graphic symbols in the style of Flash

Setting up a new document is simple, with pre-designed Web page templates included for the first time

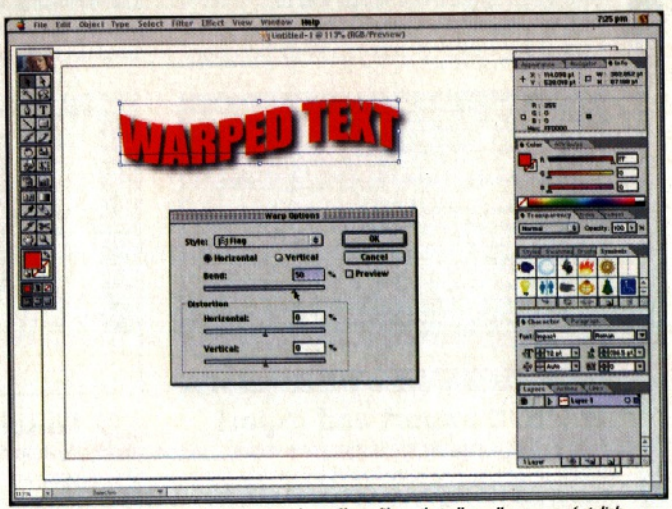
Much like Photoshop, Illustrator makes plenty of provision for using Layers and also carries an Actions palette

Get to grips with the illustrious collection of filter effects

THERE'S NO DOUBT that Adobe Illustrator is a precision drawing tool – graphic design, maps and typographically important documents are all easily created within the program. However, to add more interest to your documents, explore the latest batch of filters and effects contained within the software. Many of these effects are much the same as those found in Photoshop, but the possibilities for text manipulation have always been one of Illustrator's biggest selling points and this version is no exception.

To create incredible visual effects, simply pay a visit to the Effects menu. Most notably, the Warp option gives you a wealth of styles to apply, from subtle undulations to totally over the top weirdness. The only real limit while you browse these effects is your imagination. Combined these effects with the other options in this area of the program, such as the Liquefy tool or blending of opacity levels, you can happily design to your heart's content.

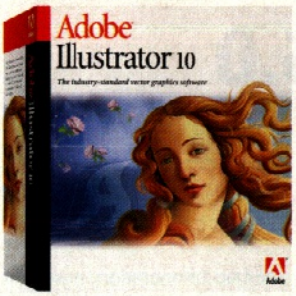
What's more, Illustrator is not the nightmare to master that you might have once thought. Recent improvements to the interface and general way it ticks means that Adobe has excelled in making this advanced drawing tool an option for any budding graphic designer or artist.



The latest version of Illustrator sports countless effects filters that allow all manner of stylish design touches

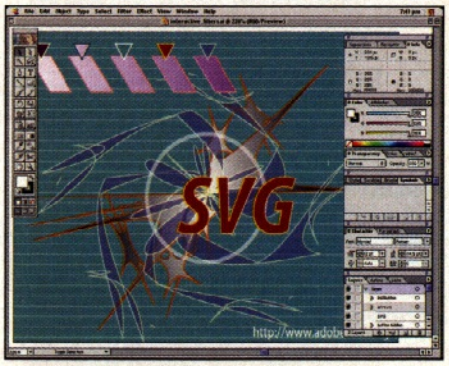
Other key features

HOW TO EXPLORE THE EXCITING NEW PROCESS OF CREATING AND EXPORTING AN SVG GRAPHIC FOR THE WEB



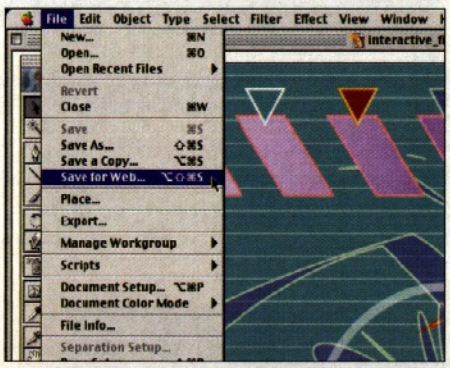
THE SCALABLE VECTOR graphic is a relatively new phenomenon, and something Adobe has spent a good deal of time perfecting. The latest version of Illustrator exploits this potential to its maximum and there is now the ability to import these SVG graphics from a variety of external sources. This format will appeal to both designers and developers because they give you the flexibility of creating files that support JavaScript and other code, whilst also allowing the total creativity that's usually missing from Web graphics. You'll also discover a wealth of effects available for the SVG format this time and you can apply these while still being able to edit elements on your page. Most notably, this lets you alter the text areas of the page while applying SVG effects.

In addition, you can also write your own personal effects into Illustrator, or customise those that are come pre-installed. This gives you the ultimate flexibility for creating artwork that is totally unique to you.



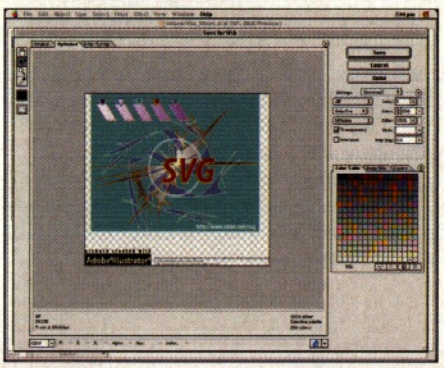
1 Create your artwork

Illustrator 10 gives you ultimate freedom on the outcome of your graphics. Manipulation of text and other visual elements has never been more attainable. Tear-off tool palettes also free you to be more creative.



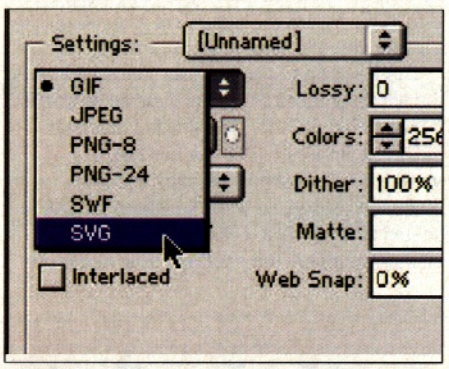
2 The save for Web option

Since this feature has been included in Illustrator, Web designers have had much more freedom when it comes to design. Optimising your graphical elements means that you'll get much leaner files.



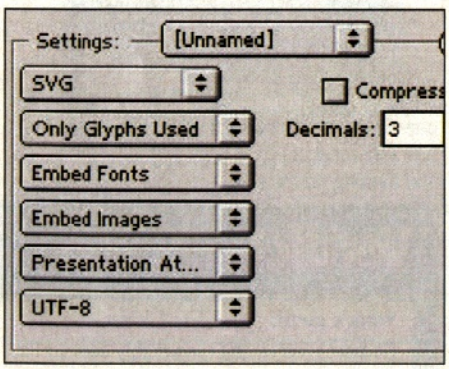
3 Preview your work

To be sure of this, Illustrator gives you a preview of your work in the file format you choose. Any discrepancies can be eliminated at this point, or if you're completely unhappy, you can go back to the drawing board and start again.



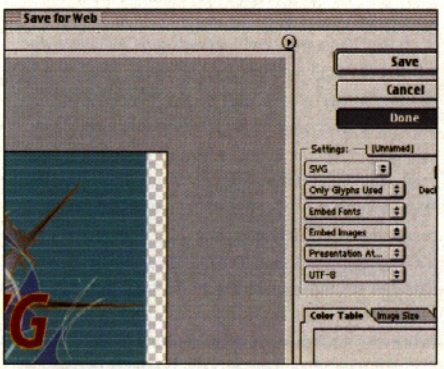
4 Select the SVG settings

There are the usual file options to be found in the Save for Web window. What is noticeably different this time are the extra formats. Alongside the more obvious GIF, JPG and PNG options, you will discover the enhanced SVG and SWF settings.



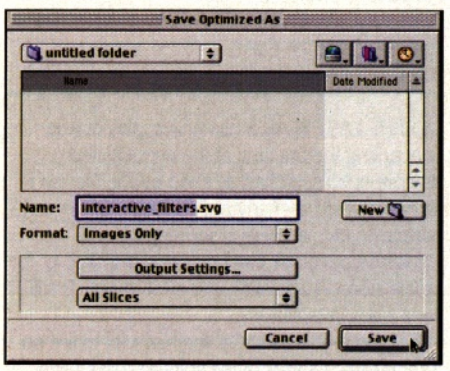
5 Fine-tuning

By selecting the SVG file format as described above, you'll be able to delve deeper into the settings and configure your SVG file to save just as you'd like it. There are multiple options for customising the settings in this extra tab.



6 Confirm you're happy

One of the most difficult tasks when getting towards the end of the creative process is the amount of options open. Still, after working through them all, you'll need to confirm that you're happy with the way things look by pressing 'Done'.

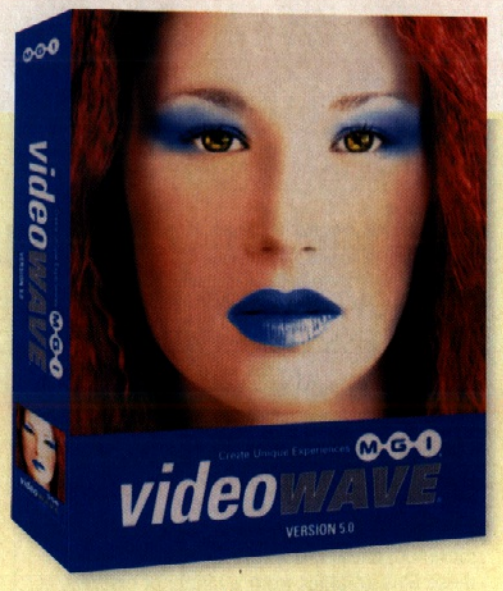


7 Store your finished files

Illustrator will then allow you to name and store your SVG file. This can be utilised in a site, whilst retaining all of the advanced properties you will have built into it during the earlier processes. The file can also be re-edited at a later date.

Videowave 5.0

PRODUCE AND EDIT YOUR OWN MOVIES THEN SHARE THEM WITH YOUR BUDDIES ONLINE



Product: Videowave 5.0
Company: MGI
Price: £89.99
URL: www.mgieurope.com

DESIGNED TO DISPEL the myth that editing digital video requires a Hollywood-style budget, this new version of Videowave lets you capture, edit, and produce your movies for less than a hundred pounds.

Whether you want to knock together a feature-length flick from your vast camcorder footage, compile a montage of the best scenes from your favourite TV program or produce a fly-on-the-wall documentary about your life using your Webcam, Videowave lets you quickly transfer video from a range of formats.

The program's spacious user interface makes the whole process of cutting a movie as simple as you could wish for. The floating elements include a library of your raw footage, a Viewscreen for playing the clips and the ubiquitous StoryLine window, where the scene sequence is laid out. Luckily, all of these elements employ the good old drag and drop method of operation, making it a cinch to quickly view any raw footage or shift your edited clips into place on the timeline.

Of course, simply cutting some bits of film and plonking them one after another won't make for pleasurable viewing, and as a result Videowave includes plenty of tools for polishing your creations. From tweaking the colour of your video to applying special effects such as animated text, ripples, shadows and image blends, you can change the mood of your production with great ease. When selected, each effect is previewed in a separate window, so you get an accurate representation of how each will look before going ahead.

One of the few gripes we had when using Videowave is that when editing long sections of raw footage in the 'Cutting Room', it's fairly difficult to jump to the specific scene you want due to the impreciseness of the play slider, although you can skip through footage one frame at a time.

On the whole, we found Videowave to be an excellent piece of software and its easy to use interface is highly addictive. Given time, the end results can be effective. While it doesn't have the powerful features of say, an Adobe Premiere or a Discreet Edit, it still scores points because of its affordability.

Verdict

What's good:
Lets you easily put together good quality video productions without spending a fortune

What's bad:
Don't expect an appearance at this year's Cannes film festival

Overall: ★★★★

Actinic Catalog 5

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

BOOST YOUR E-BUSINESS WITH THIS TOP-OF-THE-RANGE ONLINE CATALOGUE BUILDER

Product: Actinic Catalog 5
Company: Actinic
Price: £349 + VAT
URL: www.actinic.co.uk

DESPITE LAST YEAR'S numerous tales of woe concerning the bursting of the over-inflated dotcom bubble, setting up shop on the Net isn't as hair-brained as many people would have you believe. In fact, analysis is showing that the Christmas period in 2001 was busier than ever for online stores, suggesting that eCommerce is still very much in business.

Version 5 of Actinic Catalog has a lot to live up to. Previous releases of the software have been hailed by critics as a revolution in e-business development. New additions to the already delectable menu of features include enhanced order processing incorporating a new sales analysis reporting facility, an email module which helps you build customer relationship management, plus support for shared SSL encryption for added security.

These extra features just serve to compliment what is already a top-notch piece of software and mean that once you have created your online store, you have the tools to keep it ticking along nicely. This lets you concentrate on building your customer base while keeping your existing visitors happy. What's more, the initial catalogue production process is easier than ever thanks to the redesigned navigator that guides you carefully through each step of the site building procedure. Once more, Catalog 5 makes it simple to add new products, sections and photos to the site through it's neat tree-structure approach which makes marketing your product range online just as about as easy as you can get.

Anyone remotely serious about expanding their horizons (and indeed, profit margins) should consider investing in Actinic Catalog. While 400 quid may sound a fair amount to splash out on one program, it'll ensure that you never need to buy another product for getting your business up and running on the Net.

Verdict

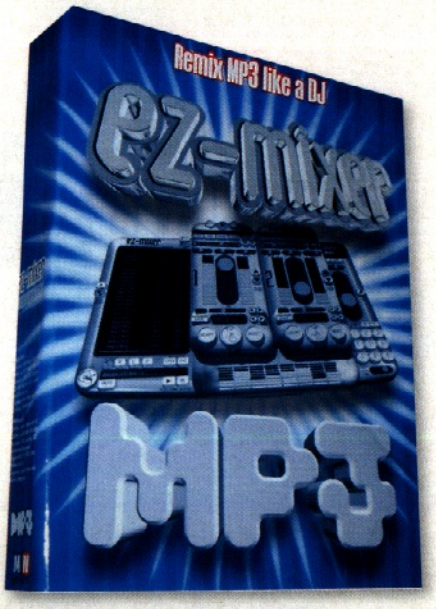
What's good:
Comprehensive and remarkably easy-to-use solution for getting your business online

What's bad:
Price may put off some smaller businesses

Overall: ★★★★★

ez-mixer

TRANSFORM YOUR MP3 COLLECTION INTO THE KIND OF MIX A PRO DJ WOULD BE PROUD OF



Product: ez-mixer
Company: IK Multimedia
Price: $39.99 (approx £28)
URL: www.ez-mixer.com

IT'S NOW POSSIBLE for even the most musically underdeveloped of punters to turn their hands to a bit of mixing, giving extra spice to that jaded glut of MP3s currently resting on their hard drives.

Ez-mixer is one of several music suites which have cropped up in recent months, promising to take control of your MP3s like never before. At its most basic level, ez-mixer will act as a fully-fledged MP3 player, complete with just about every playlist, ripping and sonic effect you could hope for.

Using ez-mixer solely for this purpose is like buying a car simply for the cigarette lighter, though. Held within the astoundingly attractive interface, you'll discover a wealth of DJ stylee features. As the terminology used within the program should tell you, some of the effects you can achieve here are on the advanced side, but shouldn't have you running for cover. Part of the joy of ez-mixer is the way that high-end features are presented, making them easy for standard MP3 lovers to achieve. Therefore, when we talk of automatic and manual cross-fades, pre-monitoring and loop points, you needn't invest in a new wig to replace the hair you'll be pulling out in frustration.

Mixing between tracks is a doddle, and is all made possible with careful manipulation of key sliders. The 'adapt' button makes it possible to mix even seemingly incompatible tracks, dragging both to the same tempo to ease the process along.

The key to the whole program is packaging complex features in an interface that's easy to access and understand. The difference this makes is that you can turn your hand to complicated mixes minutes after picking up the ez-mixer reins for the first time.

You can even assign a sample to each of the keys on your PC's number pad, to further simplify the choosing of tracks. And if you don't fancy your MP3 collection much, you'll also find a handy mix of tracks in the ez-mixer box to get you started.

Verdict

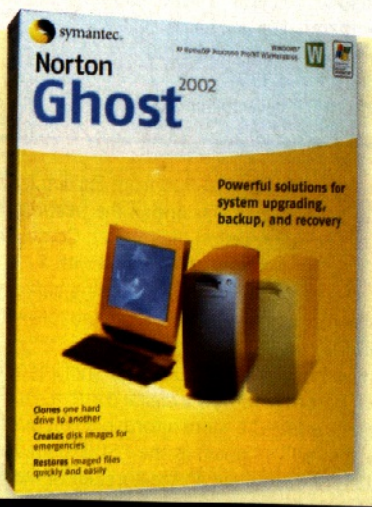
What's good:
Makes it easy to mix like a pro without breaking the bank

What's bad:
The subject matter will scare a lot of people away

Overall: ★★★★

Norton Ghost 2002

BACK YOUR SYSTEM UP A TREAT WITH THIS RESTORE TOOL



Product: Norton Ghost 2002
Company: Symantec
Price: £39.99
URL: www.symantec.com

CAUGHT UNAWARES, A system meltdown can spell untold misery to any PC user. The files, settings and options you've spent months accumulating and perfecting are suddenly gone forever, and you're forced to start again from scratch. Considering it takes a few days just to get Windows to work in the right way, re-installing your old software and hardware is a complete nightmare.

There are several ways to prevent this occurrence turning into a disaster, but one of the best methods is to back up your system with Norton Ghost. This option goes much further than standard restore programs, which are limited by their reliance on Windows. Whereas these packages offer the opportunity to restore previous set instances of Windows, Ghost takes a different route.

Basically, Ghost lets you back up your entire hard drive to CD or drive partition. This enables you to rewrite an exact image of your old setup onto your hard drive. Because of this, Ghost is the only real way of rocking back your system to a previous point.

Ghost's main advantage over its rivals is the fact that it works within DOS. Thankfully, it still includes a Graphical User Interface though, so you don't have to dust down that old DOS manual. The big plus point here is that Ghost doesn't have rely on Windows, and can therefore write over the Operating System files without any negative consequences.

Ghost is a doddle to use, and requires little of the advanced knowledge you might expect. The only problem we found is that the program wouldn't recognise our CD drive, making the writing of Ghost images difficult.

Verdict

What's good:
Unparalleled system restore program. An absolute steal at the price

What's bad:
Wouldn't let us write our Ghost image to CD

Overall: ★★★★

FujiFilm FinePix 2800Z

FUJI'S CHUNKY MID-PRICE CAM WILL WIN YOU OVER WITH ITS COMBINATION OF LOOKS AND PERFORMANCE

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Product: FujiFilm FinePix 2800Z
Company: Fuji
Phone: 020 7586 5900
Price: £399
URL: www.fujifilm.co.uk

The FinePix6900 from Fujifilm is widely accepted as one of the best digital cameras on the market. Combining a professional approach with a surprisingly easy learning curve, the 6900 also manages to dazzle onlookers with its chunky ergonomic style.

For those of you who balk at shelling out the best part of £700 on a digital camera, FujiFilm has introduced a more affordable little brother for the 6900. Known as the 2800Zoom, this has much of the styling and feature set of the 6900, only at a far more attractive price.

Retailing at just under £400, it's no surprise to find that the 2800Zoom is a cut-down version of its illustrious sibling. The main difference comes in the resolution offered – although the 2 Megapixel technology on view here should more than suffice for all but the most demanding of snappers. This equates to an on-screen resolution of 1600x1200 on the top setting, which provides users with ample image quality.

One of the major plus points for the 2800Zoom is the 'zoom' of the title. You'd be hard pressed to find any other camera around this price point boasting 6x zoom, but the 2800Zoom goes that step further. The 6x rating offered here is entirely optical, giving a true image, with none of the pixelation and graininess associated with a digital zoom. Considering the vast majority of cameras operate with half their zoom rating in the inferior digital area, the full optical capability here is nothing but a bonus.

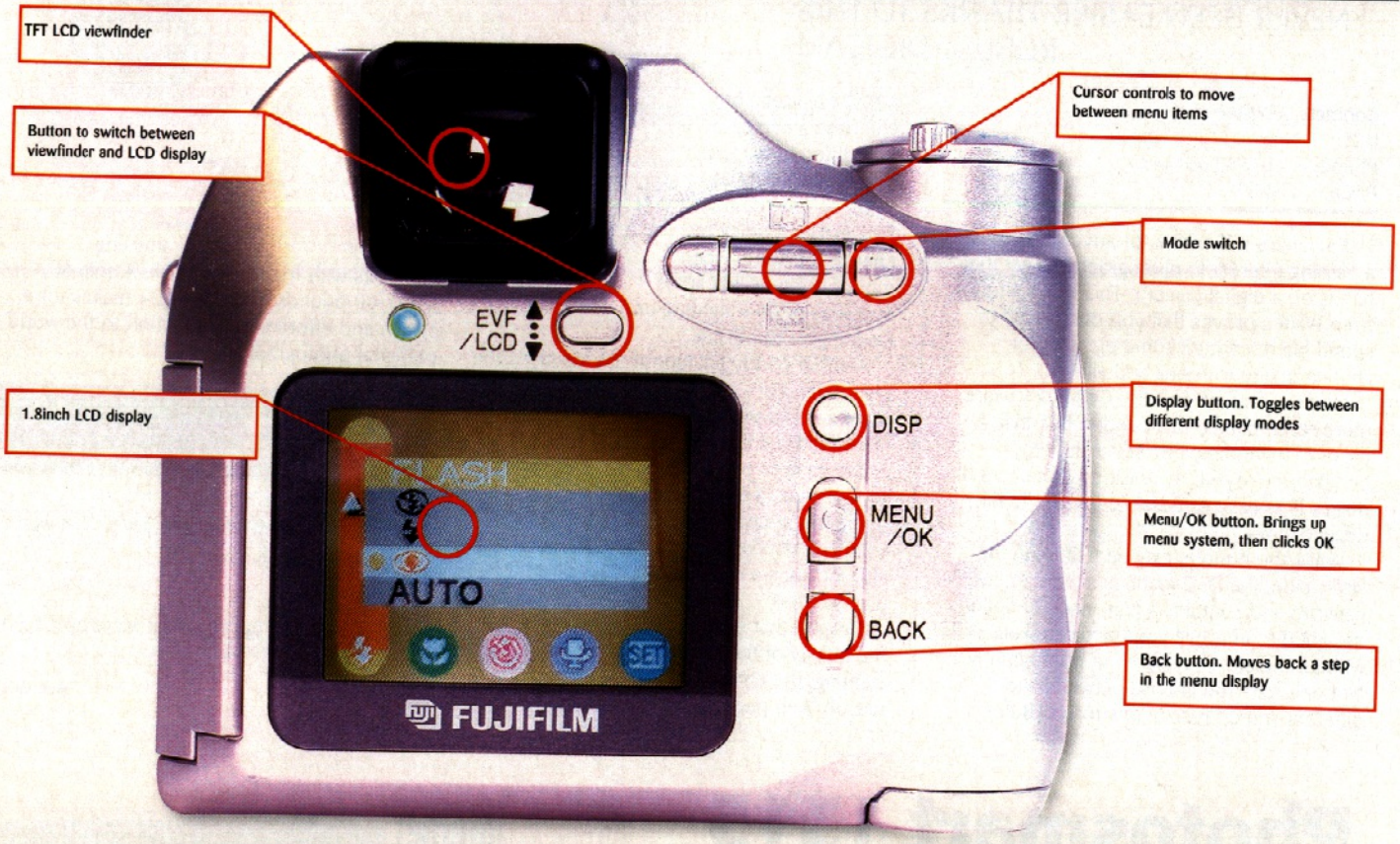
Solid and reliable

There's no denying that the FinePix 2800Zoom is at the beefier end of the market at this price point – the camera is easily twice as large as many of its rivals. There's solidity at work here, though, which is often missing from all but the most expensive of similarly styled cameras. While lightweight is always good in a portable device, there's something reassuring about picking up a camera that's heavier than you thought it would be.

Anyone who has used a Fuji cam before will appreciate that they all contain one of the more intuitive and easy to use menu systems. This is especially true of the 2800Zoom, with its mode switch containing just three options, which cuts down on confusion. The same can be said for menu navigation, which is operated via the six buttons on the back of the cam. The LCD menu is also simpler than you might expect, with each section divided into a few straightforward choices.

As for the LCD itself, Fuji continues to buck the trend by effectively including two LCDs on the back of the 2800Zoom. For image viewing, there's a 1.8-inch LCD, which offers high-resolution playback and operation. To preserve essential battery life, there's also a TFT LCD viewfinder to aid in taking shots. While most cameras content themselves with a simple 'what you see is what you get' viewfinder, this LCD version allows for integrated menus in the picture-taking process. Unfortunately, the

The FinePix 2800Zoom controls



display is nowhere near as crisp as that which you see on the main LCD, and makes for a slightly surreal experience.

Thankfully, there's a dedicated button on the back of the camera to switch between viewfinder and LCD view. One of the main advantages of this approach is that, unlike the majority of cameras, the 2800Zoom starts with the viewfinder option switched on when snapping. Considering the 2800Zoom needs a hefty four AA batteries to function, the energy saving presented by using the viewfinder instead of the LCD could prove very important in the long run.

Ample accessories

As well as being bundled with all the cables you'd ever need, the FinePix 2800Zoom comes equipped with a full range of software for your PC needs. The basic photo package is FujiFilm's FinePix Viewer, which suffices for your more general viewing and manipulation needs. For greater control and options, the inclusion of Adobe's PhotoDeluxe 4.0 will allow you to correct and alter your images until the cows come home.

As far as quality is concerned, the SmartMedia-equipped 2800Zoom won't let you down. Obviously, you're not going to end up with 4 Megapixel images on a 2 Megapixel camera, but pictures are sharp enough to stand up to scrutiny, and will be more than adequate for any kind of Web image activity.

When all is said and done, though, the 2800Zoom has been designed more for its ease of use, and not for dazzling quality. Few cameras can combine this level of features with a highly impressive point and click operation method. For this, we'd recommend this to both beginners and experienced users, keen for a simple digital photography life. ■

Optical vs digital zoom

MOST CAMERAS OFFER a combination of optical and digital zoom, but what's the difference? Well, optical zoom works in exactly the same way as a zoom lens on a traditional camera. Any time you zoom in or out, the moving parts of the lens shift accordingly to give a true representation. Digital zoom, on the other hand, is entirely down to the inner workings of the camera. The digital zoom looks at the image in the viewfinder, then electronically zooms in. This is effectively like zooming in on a picture in Paint Shop Pro, and is therefore more likely to produce a pixelated image.

Verdict

What's good:
Easy to use. Great zoom option. Looks great

What's bad:
Average image resolution for the price

Overall: ★★★★★

Waitec Caddy 24

TAKING DECENT DIGITAL SNAPS HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER THANKS TO THIS ROBUST DIGICAM

Contact: Waitec
URL: www.waitec.com
Phone: 01582 404443
Price: £59

THESE DAYS IT'S viable for anyone even with a passing interest in photography to get their hands on a digital camera. This latest offering from Waitec proves that you don't need to spend big to capture some pictures for sharing online with one and all.

On first impressions, the Caddy 24 bears more resemblance to a London bus than a piece of technology. However, lurking beneath the stylish red casing is a camera that makes it as easy as possible for you to take a decent shot.

While the buttons may be a little on the fiddly side, the LCD menu is simple to navigate and contains a nice stack of options designed to improve your picture-taking skills without the aid of a degree in photography. Not only can you choose between two different screen resolutions (604x480 or 320x240 pixels) but you have a choice of four different camera modes according to shooting environment. This makes it quick to change the setup when moving from well-lit areas to places of poor lighting or if you're moving from inside to outside.

Another handy addition to the Caddy is the Macro function, which allows you to get up close and personal to your subject with the mere flick of a switch.

The camera comes complete with all the software you'll need, ensuring that you can rig the thing up without having to make a big song and dance about it. Naturally, the kit also includes a USB lead for your plug-and-play pleasure.

Despite that even at the highest resolution the quality of the pictures aren't exactly award winning, the end result is good enough for use on Web pages and for recounting amusing moments with friends via email. A snip at under 60 pounds, the Caddy 24 makes for a stylish and effortless introduction to the world of digital photography.

Verdict

What's good:
Attractive, easy-to-operate device that won't break the bank.

What's bad:
Picture quality isn't the best we've ever seen

Overall: ★★★★

Photosmart 1315

DEVELOP PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HOME WITH THIS SMART DIGITAL PHOTO PRINTER

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Contact: Hewlett-Packard
URL: www.hp.com
Phone: n/a
Price: £299

THANKS TO THE dawn of the digital camera age, we no longer have to wait days on end for photographs to come back from the developers or stump up a fortune for one-hour processing. While in the 70s and 80s the Polaroid became a symbol of how the technological era allowed us to get results in an instant, digital photography is today taking the art of picture processing to another level.

Cue the Photosmart 1315, a stylish looking piece of gadgetry that lets you instantly take digital images off a camera and print them out in the form of a bonafide photograph before your very eyes. No waiting, no paying, no over-exposed rubbish, no worries.

Part of the beauty of the Photosmart lies in its simplicity, meaning that even the daftest of apuths can quickly transfer a digital photo from a memory card to a hard copy. All you need do is slip your camera's card into one of the three built-in readers and review your photos on the wide screen. What's more, the easy-to-use menu commands on the printer's control panel let you optimise your pictures before printing. You can even add effects such as sepia or antique to give your snaps that extra edge, plus create your own albums without the intervention of a PC. Another nice touch is the email button, which allows you to quickly share your shots with friends and family.

The printer comes bundled with photo editing software and some photographic paper to print your pictures onto. Initially, we were slightly concerned that the Photosmart would fail to do the business in terms of picture quality. However, the overall level of reproduction quelled our fears.

Of course, you can hook the device up to your PC and use it for everyday printing, meaning that if you're in the market for a new printer and you own a digital camera, this one should definitely be near the top of your wish list.

Verdict

What's good:
Lots of features and easy to use – a must for anyone with a passion for digital photography

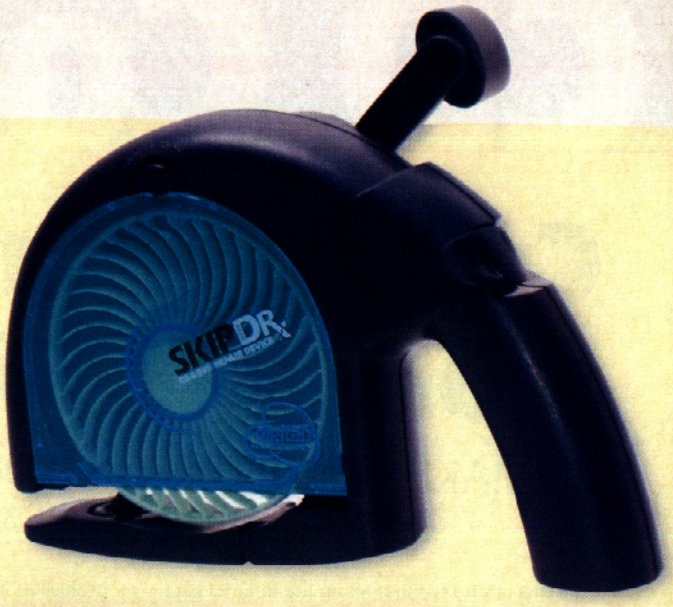
What's bad:
A tad more expensive than your average inkjet printer

Overall: ★★★★★

Skip Doctor

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

ERADICATE THE FRUSTRATIONS OF DAMAGED CDS WITH THIS SCRATCH-REPAIRING SAVIOUR



Contact: Pinpoint Digital
URL: www.pinpointdigital.co.uk
Phone: 01606 558428
Price: £29.99

YOU MUST HAVE done it – been a bit forgetful and left a prized CD outside of its box only to return and find it refuses to ever play your favourite song again. Alternatively, the CD-ROM with all your most cherished files accidentally falls onto the floor and gets scratched to kingdom come. If you frequently experience these oh-so irritating scenarios, fret no more as the Skip Doctor is now on call for a serious clean-up operation.

This unique piece of kit promises to repair scratched disks in minutes and doesn't require any sort of technical know-how to operate. The premise is simple – you just clip a CD onto the tray, spray a little magic fluid onto it then close the Skin Doctor and turn the handle. A minute or so later, after the disk has made two revolutions, the patented radial polishing process will have smoothed over any light or medium-sized scratches and removed any abrasions or grubby fingerprints. Then it's just a case of wiping away the fluid, giving the disk a quick buff and saying adios to jumpy music files, games that won't run or movies that get stuck.

When we first clapped eyes on the Skip Doctor, we were a little sceptical. After all, this is a problem that has bugged tech-savvy people for years and here's a product that promises a quick solution for a mere 30 quid. However, we took a battered audio CD that wouldn't play for toffee, gave it the Skip Doctor treatment and were impressed by the results. Sure enough, the tracks played first time and what's more, they didn't even skip once. Repeated tests showed a similar story, although the Doctor was unable to resuscitate disks that had been heavily gouged.

Unless you're the sort of person who likes to carefully organise their CDs or DVDs so that they never leave their cases for more than two seconds, this device is perfect for helping you bring your dead disks back to life.

Verdict

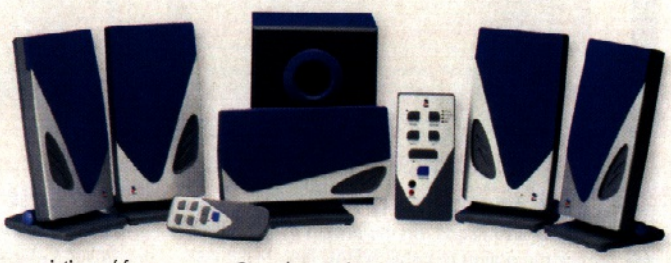
What's good:
Inexpensive, innovative device that will save you from ever having to replace damaged disks

What's bad:
Doesn't work on severely beaten-up CDs

Overall: ★★★★★

Easysound S7

WITH THESE GREAT VALUE SURROUND SOUND SPEAKERS, YOU CAN ENJOY A DYNAMIC AUDIO EXPERIENCE ON YOUR PC



Contact: NISIS
URL: www.nisis.com
Phone: 0845 458 8750
Price: £129.99

WITH ADVANCEMENTS IN broadband Internet progressing nicely and considering most new PCs coming stacked with a DVD player these days, things have never been better as far as digital home entertainment goes. As a result, it makes sense to buy devices that allow you to enjoy this multimedia extravaganza to its full extent.

People are relying more and more on their computers as an audio player, whether it's for MP3 files, streaming music or good old-fashioned CDs. Chances are though, especially if you bought your computer more than a year ago, your sound system could do with a bit of updating. This setup from NISIS lets you listen to your music, games and movies in the ear-opening sound format and what's more, it won't break the bank.

The S7 is a six speaker set, consisting of four front and rear Satellite speakers, a horizontal centre speaker and a mighty wooden sub-woofer. It also comes with a separate power amplifier and remote control, allowing the knob-twiddlers amongst you the freedom to quickly perfect your own sound. The EQ mode gives you the chance to flick between four different sound effects – namely Rock, Classic, Jazz and Pop depending on your mood or the music you're listening to. There's also a '3D sound' button on the remote for applying an artificially-generated 3D sound effect to a mono sound output, plus a volume control option.

Aside from the ease at which the sound can be controlled, the speakers also manage to look the part. The silver and royal blue combo would add an air of cool sophistication to any desktop and the satellite speakers can be tilted for aesthetic or sonic purposes.

Complete with a half-decent free 5.1 channel sound card, the S7 system is remarkably well priced, and while perhaps not as powerful in terms of sound output as some of it's pricier rivals, it's ideal if you're looking to enhance your online multimedia experiences.

Verdict

What's good:
Well-priced system that delivers a good overall performance

What's bad:
Sound quality isn't as 'pumping' as some other high-end speaker sets

Overall: ★★★★

CD Contents

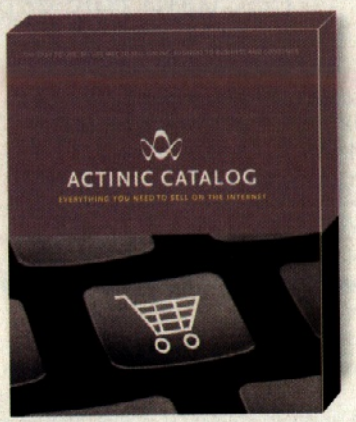
Create your own online store with Actinic

MAKE A PROFIT FROM YOUR SITE USING THE FREE TRIAL OF ACTINIC CATALOG 5

GETTING INTO BUSINESS on the Internet isn't as difficult or costly as you might think. In fact, the latest version of Actinic Catalog is specifically designed for small and medium-sized businesses, helping you to sell online easily and securely.

We've included a demo of the software on this month's CD, allowing you to create an illustrated online catalogue offline (please note that you can't publish to the Web with this evaluation version) and tinker with all the many features of the program. Easy to use design themes provide a choice of styles, or you can create your own custom design.

The full version of the software allows orders to be downloaded securely to be processed and invoiced. Reports can also be generated for stock monitoring, back order management and shipping to help the whole process of running a business online run smoothly.

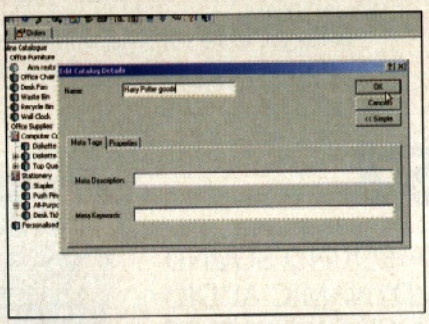


The latest version of the software is available for £349 and further details can be found at **www.actinic.co.uk**.

Build an online catalogue with Actinic

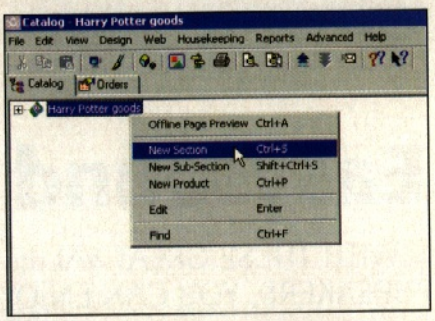
1 Install and run

Install and run the program, being sure to tick the option to install MDAC files. Make sure you have closed all of your other programs before installation.



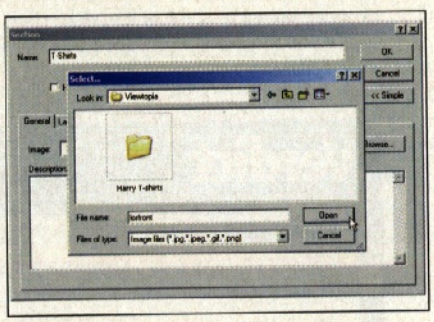
2 Edit Catalogue details

Open teh program and double click the 'Online Catalogue' icon at the top of the site structure tree on the left of the interface. Now enter a name for your new catalogue.



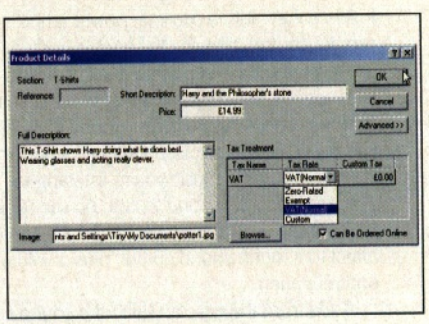
3 Add a new section

Before you start adding products, you have to create a new section. Right-click the catalogue title and select 'New Section'. Decide on a name for the section.



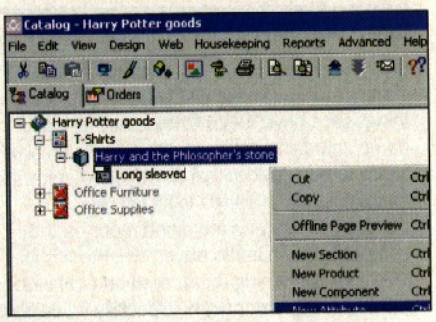
4 Alter shop sections

Each section of your store can have its own set of Meta descriptions, added by clicking the 'Meta Tags' tab. This window also allows you to add pictures – click the 'Browse' button.



5 Add products

To add a new product to the catalogue, right-click in the catalogue window and choose 'New Product'. Type a brief description and press 'Browse' to load an image of the product.



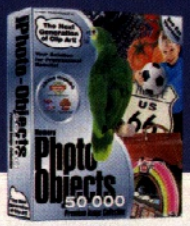
6 Optional extras

If you want to add more details about a product, right-click the product in the list and choose 'Add component' from the drop down menu. Enter the details and click 'OK'.

Try these

→ **Dreamweaver (30-day trial)**
It's not hard to see why Dreamweaver is so popular. Its blend of HTML and WYSIWYG control options allows you to effectively create stylish pages.

→ **Fireworks (30-day trial)**
For the ultimate professional touch, Fireworks' suite of text, design, illustration and image editing tools lets you put together some classy graphics for your Web site. Our tutorial on pages 84-91 reveals how to put this great program into practice.



→ **Photo Objects Sampler**
These pre-formatted PhotoObjects provide a quick and easy way of livening up your site with some quality images. The 100 photos on the Sampler contain a transparent background and can quickly be converted to a variety of formats.

Xara Webstyle version 1.2

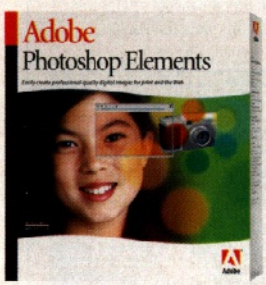
GIVE YOUR SITE AN ARTISTIC MAKEOVER WITH THE HELP OF THIS EXCELLENT WEB GRAPHICS PACKAGE

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! AS SOLD FOR £48

PROVIDING A QUICK and easy way of producing customised Web graphics, Xara Webstyle lets you liven up your site without the need for any artistic skill.

The fully working software comes with ready-made vector graphics templates that can be modified to create your own personalised 2D and 3D headings, bullets, buttons, dividers, logos and backgrounds. Because the program uses vector graphics, they lose no quality when you modify them, so if you change the text, colour or texture, the image will retain the same quality as before the change. The final images are optimised for use on the Web and can be exported as GIFs or JPEGs. For details on using the program see our special tutorial on pages 80-83.

If you enjoy using Webstyle 1 then why not take advantage of our great special offer to upgrade online to the latest release of the software, Webstyle 2 (a trial of which is included on this month's disc). Providing you register your copy of Xara Webstyle 1 by following the register link within the program, you can get Webstyle 2 for the offer price of £41+VAT. That's a saving of nearly 15% on the normal price of the latest version. To take advantage of the upgrade offer, visit **www.xara.com/ws1upgrade.asp?p=paragon**.



Photoshop Elements

ENHANCE YOUR DIGITAL PHOTOS WITH ADOBE'S AWESOME IMAGE EDITOR

A MUST FOR anyone using photographic images on their site, this program gives you all the tools you need to tweak and optimise your pictures.

The little brother of industry-favourite Adobe Photoshop, Elements is by no means the poor relation and provides a whole platter of powerful features to help you enhance, modify and correct problems with photographs such as the annoying red-eye effect, slanted images from scanners or under or over exposed pictures. You can apply image-altering filters to your digital snaps with great ease thanks to Photoshop Elements' range of drag-and-drop palettes.

We've included a 30-day trial version of Photoshop Elements on this month's cover disc and you can find out more about using the package by checking out our tutorial on pages 72-75. If you're interested in registering for the full version, it is available from the Adobe Web site at **www.adobe.co.uk/products/photoshopel/main.html** and will cost you £69.33.

Online shopping with Copernic

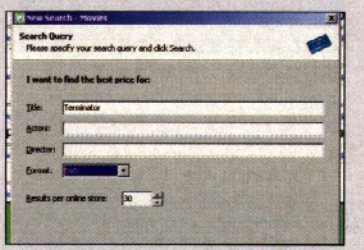
WHILE IT'S POSSIBLE to make a real killing on the Net, online bargain hunters can often waste precious hours gawking at the range of different shopping sites available.

Luckily, Copernic Shopper lets you quickly cut straight to the best deals online, saving you valuable time and more importantly, money. This desktop shopping bot hunts down product reviews and performs price comparisons by consulting several information sources and online stores from the hundreds in the program.

Searches are carried out by product category, giving you more accurate results. It also boasts a wide range of clever shopping options including a search wizard, highlighting of keywords in results, currency conversion, interactive price filtering and an integrated Web browser.

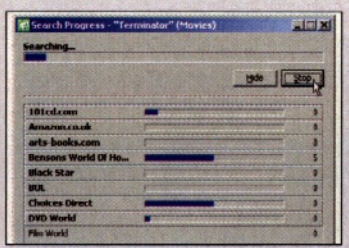
1 Choose a category

Install and run Copernic Shopper. When you launch the browser you will be taken to the 'My Shopper' page. Choose a product category to search for and click 'Find Prices'.



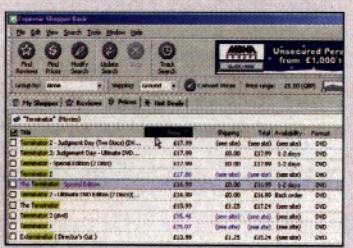
2 The search query

Enter the product-specific search criteria. Specify how many results you want to be returned and whether you want to search nationally or internationally. Now click 'Search'.



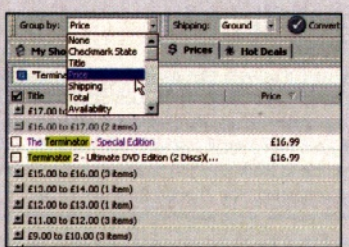
3 Search for prices

After checking for search engine updates, Copernic will look for your item on a range of different stores, displayed in the 'Search Progress' window. To halt this, click 'Stop'.



4 Price checking

The search results will now be displayed in the main window. If you wish to sort the results according to their price, simply click on the 'Price' tab in the main window.



5 Group products

You can group items according to their value. Click the 'Group By' drop down list and choose a field to group your results into. Open the grouped items by clicking the 'plus' icon.

6 Check out the goods

To view any of the items, double click on the entry in the search result. You will be taken directly to the page containing the specified product. →

CD Contents

CD highlights

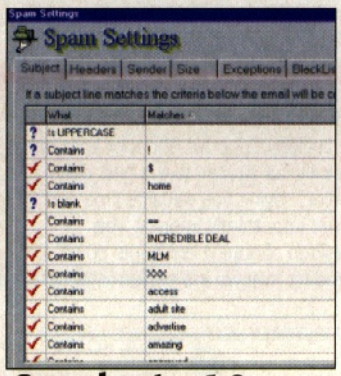
Web browsing toolkit

DRASTICALLY REVAMP THE WAY YOU LOOK AT THE NET WITH OUR PRIME SELECTION OF BROWSING AIDS

Window Washer 4.1

Shareware, 1.4Mb

Get yourself a little privacy online and free up valuable disk space with this computer history-cleaning utility. Window Washer's intuitive interface makes it easy to scrub you machine clean of unwanted information about your PC and Internet history. It can be wipe up your Netscape and Internet Explorer cache, cookies, form data and drop-down address list. The program even includes a Custom Wash Items feature that allows you to specify other files and folders that you would like to have cleaned.



Spambuster 1.9

Freeware, 1.3Mb

Ever had days when your Inbox seems to be flooded with news about the latest miracle hair-growth treatment or soft porn Web site? Thanks to this handy utility you can say goodbye to duff email forever. Spambuster contains a built-in list of 15,000 known spamming addresses and allows you to configure rules for the header and for the From and Subject lines to help prevent junk mail from darkening the doors of your mailbox. The software also comes with a fun feature called Spam Meister that lets you literally smash spam to pieces on screen.

Winamp 2.78

Freeware, 642Kb

Truly one of the greatest ways to enjoy digital music, Winamp is a fully featured player that will have you rocking along to the latest grooves for hours on end. The software can handle CDs, MP3 files and streaming audio broadcasts through it's stylish and easy to use interface. What's more, Winamp is fully skinnable, meaning you can add your own funky skins to the program. There are loads of different Web sites that contain an overwhelming choice of skins to choose from. Winamp also boasts a playlist editor for organising your tracks and a 10-band graphic equalizer with user-definable presets that can automatically load particular files.

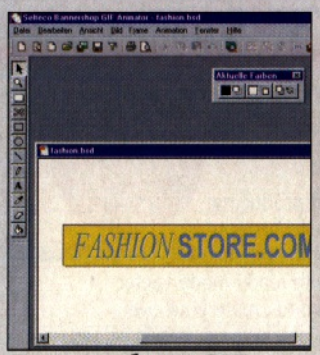
Go!Zilla 4.1

Freeware, 4.1Mb

Ensure a smooth passage to downloading utopia with the help of this kick-ass download management system. Go!Zilla comes with a sackful of tools that make it simple to work with and organise your downloaded files. This latest version of the software features new, intelligent multipart downloading technology and Go!Zilla's proprietary file mirror database, ensuring that downloads are as quick as possible. What's more, it can easily resume your download if your connection goes awry. Version 4.1 even integrates with your antivirus program to routinely scan files on completion of the transfer.

Spruce up your site

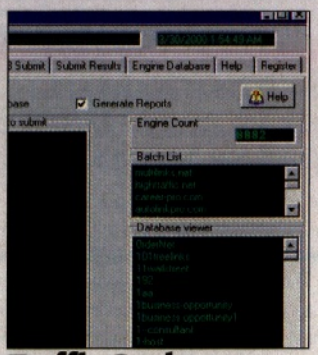
LIVEN UP YOUR PAGES WITH THIS MONTH'S WEB BUILDING BONANZA



Bannershop GIF Animator

Shareware, 1.6Mb

One sure-fire way of adding a splash of razzmatazz to your site is through the use of animation. Bannershop GIF Animator is an easy way to design, build and optimise animated GIFs for use on the Web. Eye-catching effects can be quickly assembled from pre-created images or you can produce you own animation using the software's built-in vector graphics, image retouching, and antialiased text edit tools. Bannershop's powerful optimisation engine will help you keep the file size of your GIFs down to a bare minimum.



Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72

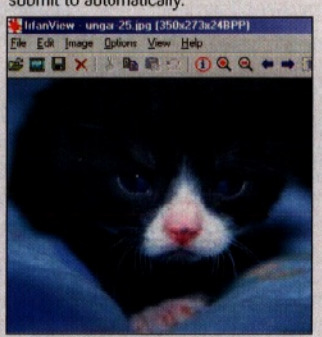
Shareware, 462Kb

After you've spent endless hours hunched over a computer knocking together your Web masterpiece, the last thing you want is for no one to get to see it. As a result, it's more or less imperative these days to submit your site to a search engine in order to guarantee some hits. Luckily, help is at hand from Traffic Seeker Pro, which automates the process of submitting your site's address to over 9,000 search engines, directories and link pages. This latest version of the program features a Crawler that hunts down new search sites for you to submit to automatically.

HomeSite 5

30-day trial, 16.4Mb

Anyone truly serious about Web design should check out HomeSite in order to improve their visitors' online experience. The HTML design tool gives users the ability to increase user productivity, extend site deployment and add support for the latest Web technologies. This latest version now includes XHTML support, a Secondary Files tab, a Folder Deployment settings option, Auto Backup, plus tighter integration with Macromedia Fireworks.



IrfanView 3.36

Freeware, 1.1Mb

This ultra-speedy image viewer and editor helps you tweak your Web images to your heart's content through its easy-to-use drag-and-drop style interface. IrfanView supports all the major graphics formats including JPG, GIF, TIFF and BMP files. The program is packed with a bumper selection of image editing and enhancing tools such as colour depth, crop, blur and sharpen. As a result, you can make sure that all your pictures look on top form for the Web.

On this month's CD

Browsing
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5 *Freeware*
- Compass 2.80 *30 day trial*
- Copernic Shopper *Freeware*
- Download Accelerator Plus 5 *Freeware*
- Eudora 5.1 *Freeware*
- Go!Zilla 4.1 *Freeware*
- HTTrack Web Site Copier 3.09 *Freeware*
- ICQ 2001b *Freeware*
- IE5 Web accessories *Freeware*
- Incredimail XE Build 501 *Freeware*
- Internet Explorer 5.5 *Freeware*
- Internet Explorer 6 *Freeware. May cause conflicts with some users' systems. We recommend this should only be installed by experienced users.*
- Morpheus 1.3 *Freeware*
- Netscape 6.2 *Freeware*
- Offline Commander 1.4 *Shareware*
- Outlook Express 5 *Freeware*
- Shockwave/Flash Player *Freeware*
- Spam Buster 1.9 *Freeware*
- Common Controls update *System*
- DirectX 8 *System*
- Visual Basic 5 *System*
- Visual Basic 6 *System*
- Trust Toolbar Plugin *Freeware*
- Winamp 2.78 *Freeware*
- Window Washer 4.1 *Shareware*
- WinZip 8.1 *Shareware*
- X Cleaner 1.2 *Freeware*
- ZoneAlarm 2.6.231.0 *Freeware*

Your Business Online
- Actinic Catalog 5 *Trial*
- Comparison Shopper 1 *Freeware*
- Credit Card Verifier 1.3 *Freeware*
- Good Keywords *Freeware*
- Invoice Store 4.0 *Shareware*
- NetShop Lite *Trial*
- Promotion Pro 4.6 *Shareware*

Email Alternatives
- AllegroMail *Trial*
- Eudora 5.1 *Freeware*
- Incredimail XE Build 501 *Freeware*
- JoMail 2.6 *Trial*
- MailEase Pro 4.8 *Trial*
- Pegasus Mail 4.0 *Freeware*
- PocoMail 2.5 *Trial*
- TabMail *Shareware*
- Talk-n-mail 2000 *Freeware*
- The Bat 1.53 *Trial*

Full Products
- Hemera PhotoObjects Sampler
- Xara Webstyle 1.2

ISP
- Free24-7.net *Free ISP*

Movies
- CinePalette Plus 2.1 *Shareware*
- iFilmEdit 1.4.5 *Trial*
- MediaPalettePlus 2.0 *Trial*
- QuickTime 5 Active Setup *Freeware. Requires Internet connection for full download of program*
- Videowave 5 *Trial*
- Windows Media Player 7.1 *Freeware*

Site Building
- ACDSee Classic 2.43 *Shareware*
- Adobe PhotoShop Elements *Trial*
- AudioGrabber 1.80 *Freeware*
- BannerShop GIF Animator 4.5 *Shareware*
- BrowserSizer 1.03 *Freeware*
- CoffeeCup HTML Editor 9.1 *Shareware*
- Cool Page 2.7 *Freeware*
- Dreamweaver 4 *Trial*
- E-Quill 3.0 *Freeware*
- Flash 5 *Trial*
- FlashWizard 2.0 *Freeware*
- Gate Keeper 3.2 *Freeware*
- HomeSite 5 *Trial*
- HTML Font Colorizer 2.04 *Freeware*
- HTML Kit 1 (Build 290) *Freeware*
- Imagemapic 1 *Freeware. Requires Visual Basic 6*
- IrfanView 3.61 *Freeware*
- Jpeg Cleaner 2.2 *Freeware*
- MiniMapper Plus *Freeware*
- MouseOver Button Wizard 2.2 *Freeware*
- Note Tab Pro 4.85 *Shareware*
- SWiSH 2 *Shareware*
- Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72 *Shareware*
- Website Backgrounds 2.0 *Freeware*
- WS_FTP *Shareware*
- Xara Webstyle 2 *Trial*

Tutorials
- CoffeeCup Firestarter 4.2 *Shareware*
- Eudora 5.1 *Freeware*
- FastNet 99 *Freeware*
- Fireworks 4 *Trial*
- GIMP Update *Freeware*
- ICQ 2001b *Freeware*
- Netscape 6.2 *Freeware*
- Offline Commander 1.4 *Shareware*
- Search Maker Pro 2.1 *Shareware*
- SentThere Pro 3.0 *Freeware*
- The GIMP *Freeware*
- Viewtopia *Shareware*

How to use this month's free CD

THE MINIMUM RECOMMENDED specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 16Mb RAM, 16 bit colour, Windows 95/98/ME, Intel Pentium or compatible P90. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the start menu, select RUN and type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'. Please note: this CD is PC-only.

Damaged discs

We will be please to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs

If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you out a replacement disc. Email subs@paragon.co.uk quoting the magazine and issue number, full postal address and daytime phone number.

Problems using the disc

If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email cdhelp@paragon.co.uk. Questions will be answered twice daily.

Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email.

Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone 01202 200259.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 operating systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

ON THE CD

Get online with Tiscali

AS MOST PEOPLE KNOW. THE INTERNET IS THE GATEWAY TO A WORLD OF MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT, NEWS AND INFORMATION AND PROVIDES A VITAL COMMUNICATION MEDIUM – BUT WHICH INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER OFFERS YOU THE BEST VALUE FOR YOUR TIME ONLINE?

Europe's leading ISP

Over three million people in the UK alone have already chosen Tiscali.

Tiscali recently launched in the UK and its determination to provide the very best Internet service to its customers has already established it as Europe's leading Internet service provider. So, what makes Tiscali so popular?

Fast and reliable

For a start, its members enjoy consistently fast and reliable Internet access with industry research having rated Tiscali amongst the fastest service providers.

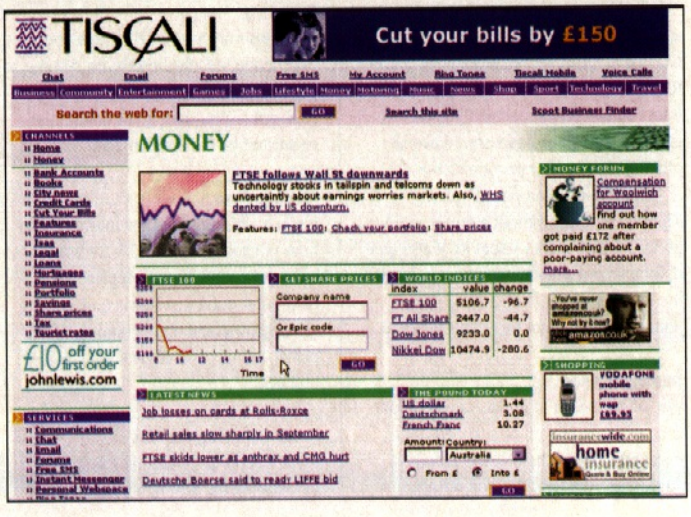
Great value packages

Tiscali also offers a wide choice of money-saving Internet call packages to suit everyone, regardless of how much or little you use the Internet. These include Tiscali Classic – a no monthly fees package where you just pay local phone rates for the time you are online.

There's also the all-inclusive packages which let you use the Internet at times that suit you for a fixed monthly fee with no additional call charges.

Find what you want – fast

Whichever package you choose to take up, you'll find that Tiscali has been designed to make finding what you want from the Internet as quick and easy as possible. Tiscali has organised its information into fifteen "Channels" such as Entertainment, Motoring, Shopping and Travel - each packed with the latest news, information, offers and links to other relevant Web pages.



You can also get straight to the information you want using the powerful Search feature – and enjoy even greater control with Tiscali's Advanced Search which allows you to filter your options further by date, country, language and more!

Everything you need to communicate!

In the Tiscali Communication Channel you'll find everything you need to communicate over the Internet in one easy-to-use area.

As a member you get five free email addresses and because the email service is Web-based you can access your email from any Internet connected PC!

Even faster than email, Tiscali's Instant Messenger is the best way to chat online instantly with friends and colleagues over the Internet. Its powerful features let you see at a glance who is online and exchange messages in an instant! You can even send Web page links and attachments to your recipients' desktop, making this a real alternative to email.

Tiscali provides plenty of other ways to communicate over the Net, including discussion forums, chat rooms, even a text messaging service which lets you send up to 10 FREE text messages a day from your PC to any UK mobile phone.

Join now!

It's not hard to see why Tiscali is the top choice for those looking for a great value ISP

Free 24-7

FOR JUST £7.99 A MONTH YOU CAN ENJOY FREE 24-7'S UNMETERED INTERNET SERVICE

free24-7.net

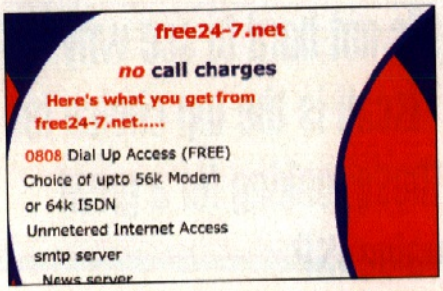
Service provider:	Free 24-7.net
Customer enquires:	0870 220 3506
Modem speeds:	Up to 56k(x2, K56Flex, V.90, ISDN 64 (Must have a BT phone line)
Technical support:	0906 221 1321 (£1 a minute)
URL:	www.free24-7.net
Monthly rate:	£7.99
Platforms:	Win 3.x, 95,98,ME, NT4, 2000, Mac, Windows XP 2000 Professional, XP

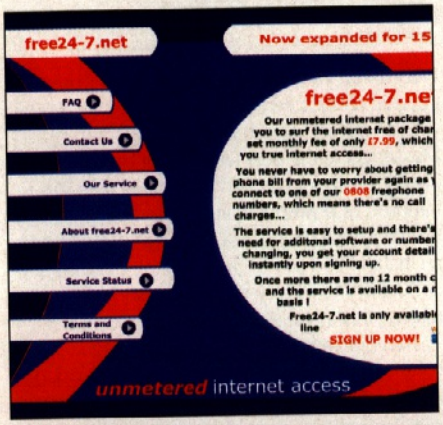
Why should you choose Free 24-7?

Free 24-7's unmetered Internet package was launched specifically to provide a no frills approach to Internet access at the lowest possible price. This allows you to browse the Internet freely with no call charges for the most competitive price on the market – JUST £7.99 PER MONTH. That's right, you never have to worry about a high phone bill again, once you connect with one of our 0808-freephone numbers.

Why is Free 24-7 so cheap?

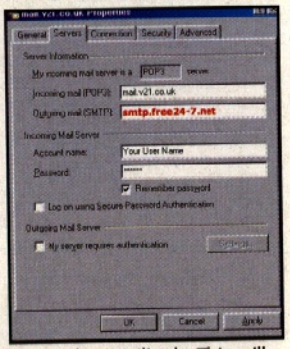
Free 24-7 is a subsidiary of the well-known V-21 'Family Friendly' Internet provider, and so comes from a company with a good background of delivering first-rate access at competitive prices. The no frills ethos means that you as a customer are not paying for expensive services you may never use or need, such as home page content, Web space and email addresses. 24-7 has designed this service for experienced users who know what they want from the Internet.





How do I get emails?

To keep the cost down we do not supply email addresses. This doesn't mean you cannot have email. If you already have email addresses, all you need to do is change the outgoing smtp server details for those accounts. Below is a brief description of how this is done using Outlook Express / Outlook.



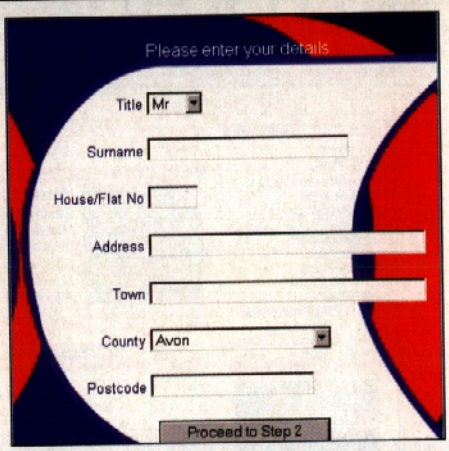
In Outlook Express go to 'Tools' and then 'Accounts'. Choose the 'Mail' tab. This will list all of your email accounts installed on your PC, click on the account you wish to change this will highlight it. Then press the 'Properties' button and go to the server's tab. Change the outgoing SMTP server to the following: smtp.free24-7.net

Press 'Apply' and then 'OK'. This now means that you can receive messages from your existing mail accounts and send mail through our servers.

How do I sign up?

THE SERVICE IS easy to set up and there's no need for any additional software, you will get your account details upon signing up. We have supplied our sign up software on this issue's CD. Insert the disc and then choose the Free 24-7 option from the menu; this will take you through the sign up process. You can be online in as little as ten minutes – all you need to do is to fill in the application form giving a username and password and payment details. This will provide you with one of our 0808 dial up numbers.

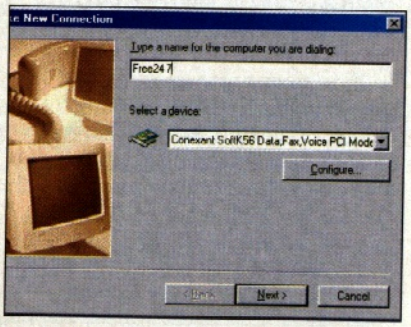
From there all you need to do is make a new dial up connection in Dial-Up Networking on your PC.



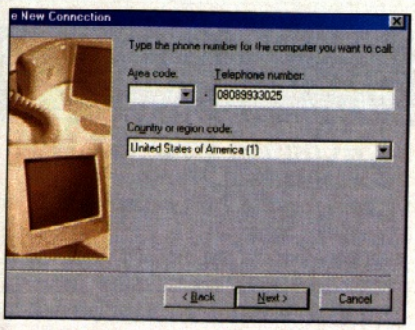
Join now!

How to make a Dial-up Connection

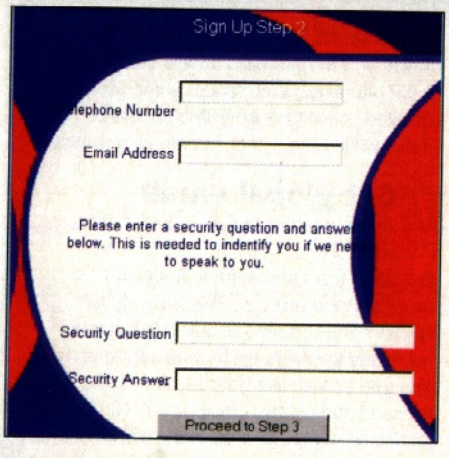
IT'S VERY EASY to set up your Dial-Up Connection, here's how you do it in Windows 98
Go to 'My computer' and then 'Dial-Up Networking'. Double click on 'Make new connection'.

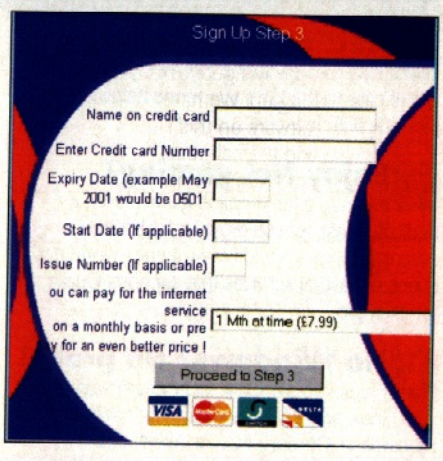


In the box asking for 'a name for the computer you are dialling', type 'free24 7' and then press 'Next
When entering the area code and telephone, put it all in the telephone number box.



Then press 'Next', followed by 'Finish'. This will subsequently put an icon in Dial-Up Networking, and you can then place a shortcut for this onto your desktop.
After all this is completed, you can then access the Internet immediately using your existing browser (Explorer, Netscape, Opera etc).





Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering Internet service providers and the very best Net software and hardware. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops encourage you to spend a little more on buying higher spec products than you really need.

Buy with confidence

This is why *Practical Internet*'s Buyers' Guide is so useful. It's been written with everyday Net users like you in mind and only includes the products and services which we think are genuinely worth buying.

The information here is updated every month, but please note that prices and features do sometimes change before we can amend them on these pages – so it's best to check with the supplier before buying.

Look out for our cherished Best Buy logo (below) which is only awarded to the best quality products around.

Practical internet
BEST BUY ★★★★★

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

NEVER SPEND MONEY ON YOUR INTERNET PHONE CALLS AGAIN WITH THESE UNMETERED ISPS. (COSTS ARE MONTHLY)

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
4theNet Unlimited http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
4theNet Unlimited Business http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
4theNET Unlimited Daytime http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00 Everyday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
4theNET Unlimited Off-peak http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Abel DIAL Anytime http://www.abel.co.uk	£27.99	Unknown	Unknown	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 25p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime http://www.abel.co.uk	£11.99	Unknown	Unknown	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Premium - 25p
Asian Biz HomeTime http://www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Anytime http://www.asian-biz.net	£25.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
Black Britain - Surf Business Unlimited http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Black Britain - Surf HomeTime http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00 Everyday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£31.74	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Local Rate
BT Connect Lite http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£10.69	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	20	Yes	Premium - 50p
BTopenworld Anytime http://www.btopenworld.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
Chalkface Hometime http://www.chalkface.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00 Everyday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Always On http://www.charitydays.net	£152.74	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Lite http://www.charitydays.net	£29.36	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Standard http://www.charitydays.net	£52.86	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Heavy http://www.charitydays.net	£34.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite http://www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate

Seven steps to pick your ideal Internet service provider

1 Choose your ISP type

UNMETERED ISPS make a monthly subscription charge, but you are not billed for any Net phone charges.

FREE ISPS don't charge monthly subscription rates, but you pay local phone rates when online.

PAY ISPS make a monthly subscription charge. You also pay local phone rates when online. They are generally faster and more reliable, though.

2 Is FRIACO for me?

FRIACO (or Flat Rate Internet Access Call Origination) is a form of wholesale Net access that costs ISPs 60-80% less than before. FRIACO ISPs are usually more financially stable and reliable than their troubled predecessors.

3 Getting speedy help

If you're new to the Internet, you will make lots of calls to the ISP's telephone helpline – so pick one with low-cost support.

4 Enjoy Net gaming?

If you're a keen online game player, a dedicated fast service provider is absolutely essential. GamesWorld (**www.games-world.net**) is one of several services that supports Quake, for example.

5 No Windows? No probs!

Freeserve, BT Click and Demon work well with Linux, while Mac users should consider Madasafish, Demon, AOL or AbelGratis.

6 Building a Web site?

If you want to build a Web site, check an ISP offers free Web space. Some provide unlimited space (though 10Mb should be ample) while others offer free domain names.

7 Get global email

If your Internet service provider offers a Webmail service you'll be able to access your email from anywhere in the world through a Web browser. This is handy for travellers and business people. Having said that, many travellers get by with a third-party Web mail service like Hotmail, as this also lets you send and receive email via any Net-connected computer around the world.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
Net 4 Nowt

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
ClaraNET Freetime Anytime Business http://www.clara.net	£24.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited http://www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	18:00 - 02:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	50	Yes	Local Rate
Cloud Nine BusinessSurf Economy http://www2.cloud-nine.com	£24.68	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	100	Yes	Premium - 75p
Cloud Nine HomeSurf Economy http://www2.cloud-nine.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	Yes	Premium - 75p
Eclipse Internet http://www.eclipse.net.uk	£5.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	10	Yes	Standard BT
Eclipse Internet http://www.eclipse.net.uk	£19.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Standard BT
Fast24 Anytime http://www.fast24.co.uk	£8.25	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Fasthosts FreeCall Home http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	200	Yes	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime http://www.firenet.uk.net	£10.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Firenet Anytime Plus http://www.firenet.uk.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Free24-7 http://www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	Yes	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Home Lite http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£5.75	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Home Off-Peak http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Universal 24/7 http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£16.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime http://www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Standard BT
Freedom2Surf Unlimited http://www.freedom2surf.net	£96.37	No	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	Standard BT
Freedom2Surf Unlimited http://www.freedom2surf.net	£15.39	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	25	Yes	Standard BT
Free-Online Connect Always On http://www.free-online.co.uk	£99.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Always On (Business) http://www.free-online.co.uk	£119.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Biz http://www.free-online.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect BizLite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Heavy http://www.free-online.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Lite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£6.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard http://www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Freeserve Anytime http://www.freeserve.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
Freeserve HomeTime http://www.freeserve.com	£10.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
Games-World http://www.games-world.net	£19.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	National Rate
GlenWorld http://www.glen-world.co.uk	£14.95	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	0	Unknown	N/A
Intensive Networks http://web.intensive.net	£19.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	National Rate
intY http://www.inty.net	£32.91	No	Yes	24 Hours	5	Yes	National Rate
ItsGoodToGive http://www.itsgoodtogive.co.uk	£11.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	Yes	Premium - 60p
Jings http://www.jings.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
KeMe.com - Elite http://www.keme.com	£24.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
KeMe.com - Plus http://www.keme.com	£19.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
KeMe.com - Standard http://www.keme.com	£14.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
KeMe.com - Supreme http://www.keme.com	£29.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
KeMe.com - Unlimited http://www.keme.com	£44.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
Kingston AnyTime http://www.kcltd.co.uk	£29.99	Unknown	N/A	24 Hours	20	Yes	Premium - 60p
Kingston FreeTime http://www.kcltd.co.uk	£9.99	Unknown	N/A	General Off-Peak	20	Yes	Premium - 60p
LineOne AnyTime http://www.lineone.net	£14.99	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
LineOne SurfTime http://www.lineone.net	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 25p
Metro800 Business Gold http://www.metronet.co.uk	£18.79	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Metro800 Business Unlimited http://www.metronet.co.uk	£12.91	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
NildramSurftime http://www.getsurftime.co.uk	£17.74	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	25	Yes	Standard BT
NildramSurftimePlus http://www.getsurftime.co.uk	£43.49	No	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	Standard BT

TOP BUYS

Web site builders

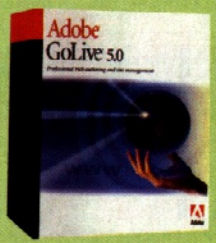
Dreamweaver 4

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Arguably the solidest Web authoring package.
What's bad? The price. More than £300 for a copy is likely to deter all but the most serious amateur Web builders.
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

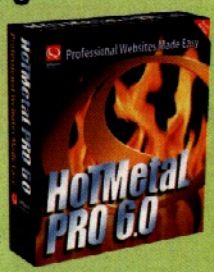
Adobe GoLive 5

£229
www.adobe.com
What's good? Vastly impressive range of features. Easy to pick up and use from the box.
What's bad? Not cheap. Still unlikely to win over Dreamweaver die-hards
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★



HoTMetaL Pro 6

£79
www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good? Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features
What's bad? The integration of HTML coding might bamboozle beginners
Telephone: 020 8387 4110
Verdict: ★★★★



Flash 5

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Allows you to create stunning interactive animations. Great for beginners and experts alike
What's bad? Can be somewhat fiddly at first
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

Net4Nowt

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com

Buyers' guide

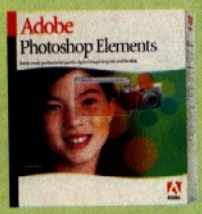
Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

Web image editors

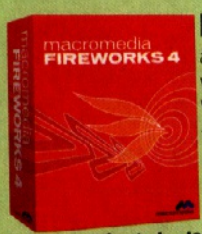
Photo Impact 7

£89.00
www.ulead.co.uk
What's good? Extremely comprehensive graphics package for the price
What's bad? It's not Photoshop
Email: info@ulead.de
Verdict: ★★★★★



Adobe Photoshop Elements

£79
www.adobe.com
What's good? The greatest graphics program on the go. Cheap too!
What's bad? This is an excellent all-round package suitable for all levels of PC user, but it lacks professional publishing tools.
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★★



Fireworks 4

£139
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Very tasty at helping you make animated GIFs for menus and general Web design
What's bad? It's a tad pricey and overpowering for the beginner
Telephone: 020 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★

JASC Paint Shop Pro 7 AE

£79+VAT
www.digitalworkshop.co.uk
What's good? Cheap, user-friendly and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics
What's bad? Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Photoshop
Telephone: 01295 258335
Verdict: ★★★★★

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
nStream http://www.nstream.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	25	No	Standard BT
ntlworld http://www.ntlworld.com	£0.00	No	No	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - £1.00
OneTel http://www.onetel.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Pipex DialTime Combined 24/7 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£81.96	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Combined 24/7 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£152.46	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1:1 24/7 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£117.21	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1:1 24/7 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£222.96	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1:1 Weekdays http://www.dial.pipex.com	£70.21	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1:1 Weekdays 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£128.96	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 3:1 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£46.71	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e http://www.dial.pipex.com	£23.21	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£34.96	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	National Rate
PlusNet Connect Always On http://www.plus.net	£99.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz http://www.plus.net	£39.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Always On http://www.plus.net	£119.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Lite http://www.plus.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Heavy User http://www.plus.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Lite User http://www.plus.net	£6.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Standard http://www.plus.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	250	Yes	Local Rate
Powergen Anytime http://www.pgen.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Daytime http://www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Evenings & Weekends http://www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	National Rate
Silvermead Business Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Silvermead Internet Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SniffOut DreamTime http://www.sniffout.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Local Rate
SniffOut PeakTime http://www.sniffout.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Local Rate
SniffOut SmartTime http://www.sniffout.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
SniffOut TimeOut http://www.sniffout.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
Sonnet Internet Solo 24/7 http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet Solo Daytime http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	50	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite 24/7 http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite Daytime http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	25	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet Symphony http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£64.63	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	100	Yes	Local Rate
SupaNet Supahighway http://www.supahighway.com	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Business Unlimited One http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Saturday	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Gold http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£15.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime HomeTime http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime OffPeak http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Silver http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
SurfingRabbit http://www.surfingrabbit.com	£19.99	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	10	No	National Rate
Tiny T:Surf Value http://www.tinyonline.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
TinyT:SurfPlus http://www.tinyonline.net/tsurf	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Anytime http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Daytime http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£9.99	No	Yes	08:00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Offpeak http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	50	Yes	Premium - 50p
TotalServe Ultimate Express http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£2.34	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
TotalServe UltimateSurf 24/7 http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£12.97	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (multi) http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£35.24	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Premium - 50p

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NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (single) http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£29.37	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
Totalserve UltimateSurf Lite http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£8.22	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	Yes	Premium - 50p
UKStamp Business http://www.ukstamp.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Standard BT
UKStamp Residential http://www.ukstamp.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	Yes	N/A
V21 http://www.v21.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	Yes	Premium - £1.00
Virgin.net 24seven http://www.virgin.net	£15.00	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	National Rate
Vispa Connect Anytime http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£14.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	Yes	Local Rate
Vispa Connect Hometime Lite http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£12.98	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	15	Yes	Local Rate
Vispa Connect Hometime Plus http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£34.98	No	Yes	General Off Peak	15	Yes	Local Rate
Vizzavi http://www.vizzavi.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	No	Premium - 50p
WHSmithnet Flat Rate http://www.whsmith.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
WHSmithnet Off Peak http://www.whsmith.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	10	Yes	Premium - 50p
Wonkypig http://www.wonkypig.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	Yes	National Rate
Wonkypig 0800 http://www.wonkypig.com	£14.99	No	No	24 Hours	5	Yes	National Rate
Zetnet 24/7 http://www.zetnet.co.uk	£29.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	25	Yes	National Rate
Zetnet off-peak http://www.zetnet.co.uk	£15.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	25	Yes	National Rate
Zoom http://www.zoom.co.uk	£0.00	No	No	24 Hours	20	Yes	Premium - 25p

BROADBAND AND ADSL SERVICES

GET SUPER-FAST, ALWAYS-ON NET ACCESS FROM THESE BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDERS. COSTS SHOWN ARE MONTHLY

NAME AND URL	TYPE OF ACCESS	INSTALL FEE	COST	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWSGROUPS
Alcom Internix (business) 0512 Kbps http://www.adsl-internet-access.co.uk	ADSL	£105.69	£260.00	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold (consumer) 512Kbps http://www.aa.nu	ADSL	£76.38	£235.00	999	999	Yes
AppleOnline (business) 0512Kbps http://www.appleonline.net	ADSL	£155.00	£260.00	999	25	Yes
Atlantic Telecom (business) 1Mbps http://www.atlantic-telecom.com	ADSL	£188.00	£305.50	999	80	Yes
Atlantic Telecom (business) 2Mbps http://www.atlantic-telecom.com	ADSL	£258.50	£305.50	999	80	Yes
Beyond Access http://www.beyondaccess.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
Beyond Access (business) 1Mbps http://www.beyondaccess.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
BTopenworld business1000PLUS http://www.btopenworld.com	ADSL	£152.74	£305.50	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business2000PLUS http://www.btopenworld.com	ADSL	£187.99	£305.50	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500 http://www.btopenworld.com	ADSL	£46.87	£88.13	10	20	Yes
CharityDAYS Donate At Work 1000 http://www.charitydays.net	ADSL	£146.86	£305.50	999	500	Yes
ClaraDSL 1000 http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£176.25	£305.50	15	80	Yes
ClaraDSL 2000 http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£235.00	£305.50	15	80	Yes
ClaraDSL 500 http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£117.50	£305.50	15	80	Yes
ClaraDSL Solo http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£49.99	£176.25	999	50	Yes
Colt (business) 0513Kbps http://www.oncolt.com	ADSL	£149.23	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Colt (business) 1 Mbps http://www.oncolt.com	ADSL	£176.25	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Colt (business) 2Mbps http://www.oncolt.com	ADSL	£203.28	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Demon Express http://www.demon.net	ADSL	£49.99	£150.00	999	20	Yes
Demon Express Gold http://www.demon.net	ADSL	£340.75	£293.75	999	50	Yes
Demon Express Plus http://www.demon.net	ADSL	£111.63	£293.75	999	20	Yes
Demon Express Pro http://www.demon.net	ADSL	£205.63	£293.75	999	20	Yes
Easynet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.uk.easynet.net	ADSL	£92.83	£323.13	10	0	Unknown
Easynet (business) 1Mbps http://www.uk.easynet.net	ADSL	£116.33	£323.13	10	0	Unknown
Eclipse Internet (business) 2Mbps http://www.eclipse.net.uk	ADSL	£282.00	£293.75	999	20	Yes
Eclipse Internet (consumer) http://www.eclipse.net.uk	ADSL	£57.58	£176.25	5	10	Yes
edNET http://www.ednet.co.uk	ADSL	£70.50	£0.00	999	25	Yes

TOP BUYS

Digital cameras

Nikon Coolpix 880

£680
www.nikon.co.uk
What's good? Impressive 3.34 megapixel count. Loads of features. Compact and nice to handle
What's bad? It's not that cheap
Telephone: 0800 230 220
Verdict: ★★★★★

Canon Digital Ixus

£439
www.canon.co.uk
What's good? Small and stylish. Good zoom lens. Excellent image quality
What's bad? Could get lost quite easily
Telephone: 0121 6808062
Verdict: ★★★★

Kodak DX3900

£449
www.kodak.co.uk
What's good? Sits in a handy docking station, making picture transfer a doddle. Menu system is excellent
What's bad? A bit too simplistic and restricted for the money
Telephone: 0870 243 0270
Verdict: ★★★★

Pentax Optio 330

£499
www.pentax.co.uk
What's good? Excellent features and options. Compact and cheap at the price
What's bad? Its bulk can be bothersome.
Telephone: 01753 792792
Verdict: ★★★★★

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Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

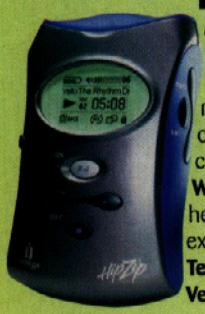
TOP BUYS
MP3 Players

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Sonic Blue Rio600

£170
www.diamondmm.co.uk
What's good? Several playback modes. Vibrant and pacy sound. Expandable up to 340Mb
What's bad? Only 32Mb memory as standard
Telephone: 01189 444400
Verdict: ★★★★★

Iomega HipZip



£290
www.iomega-europe.com
What's good? Uses removable media instead of flash memory, which is cheaper
What's bad? Bulkier and heavier than the Rio, also expensive
Telephone: 020 7365 9527
Verdict: ★★★★

Smart MP3 Player

£124
www.jedan.co.uk
What's good? Plays both normal and MP3 CDs. Decent sound quality
What's bad? Very odd interface. Not compatible with WMA or supplied with encoding software
Telephone: 020 8668 0016
Verdict: ★★★★

Samsung Yepp YP-NEU

£230
www.yepparty.com
What's good? Looks rather beautiful. Comes supplied with 64Mb of memory
What's bad? Poor sound. Sparse features. Limited LCD display of information
Telephone: 0800 521652
Verdict: ★★★★

NAME AND URL	TYPE OF ACCESS	INSTALL FEE	COST	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWSGROUPS
edNET (business) http://www.ednet.co.uk	ADSL	£117.50	£305.50	999	25	Yes
Europe Online http://www.europeonline.com	Satellite	£12.50	£0.00	5	0	Yes
FDD (business) 0512Kbps http://www.fdd.co.uk	ADSL	£117.50	£317.25	5	50	Yes
Firstnet 5000 http://www.firstnet.net.uk	ADSL	£199.75	£352.50	999	20	Yes
Firstnet 5000plus http://www.firstnet.net.uk	ADSL	£293.75	£352.50	999	20	Yes
iomart CopperBurst 500 USB http://www.iomartdsl.com	ADSL	£49.94	£180.00	999	25	Yes
Jings 500U PLUS http://www.jings.com	ADSL	£59.99	£180.00	999	25	Yes
Karoo RapidTime (Residential) http://www.kcltd.co.uk	ADSL	£39.99	£150.00	999	20	Yes
Knowall (business) 0512Kbps http://www.knowall-it.co.uk	ADSL	£117.50	£305.50	0	0	No
Mailbox Standard Connect 500 http://www.mailbox.net.uk	ADSL	£52.88	£188.00	10	25	Yes
MetroNet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£129.25	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet (business) 1Mbps http://www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet (business) 2Mbps http://www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£233.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet (consumer) http://www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£58.71	£176.25	5	20	Yes
Mistral (business) 0512Kbps http://www.mistral.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
Mistral (business) 1Mbps http://www.mistral.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
Mistral (business) 2Mbps http://www.mistral.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
netAxis (business) 0512Kbps http://www.netaxis.co.uk	ADSL	£116.33	£352.50	999	10	Yes
netAxis (business) 1Mbps http://www.netaxis.co.uk	ADSL	£175.08	£352.50	999	10	Yes
netAxis (business) 2Mbsp http://www.netaxis.co.uk	ADSL	£233.83	£352.50	999	10	Unknown
netAxis (consumer) http://www.netaxis.co.uk	ADSL	£57.58	£176.25	999	10	Yes
Netscalibur (business) 0512Kbps http://www.netscalibur.co.uk	ADSL	£135.13	£323.13	999	20	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Professional http://www.plus.net	ADSL	£88.13	£305.50	999	250	Yes
Quik Internet (business) 2Mbps http://www.quikinternet.co.uk	ADSL	£203.28	£305.50	10	0	Yes
Ramcom (business) 1Mbps http://www.ramcom.co.uk	ADSL	£193.88	£323.13	999	20	Yes
Ramcom (business) 2Mbps http://www.ramcom.co.uk	ADSL	£223.25	£323.13	999	20	Yes
Supanet - 0512Kbps http://www.supanet.com	ADSL	£115.15	£305.50	999	20	Yes
Tiscali (consumer) http://www.tiscali.co.uk	ADSL	£39.99	£150.00	999	50	Yes
Vispa (business) 0512Kbps http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£110.45	£336.05	999	15	Yes
Vispa (business) 1Mbps http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£150.40	£336.05	999	15	Yes

PAY ISPs

WANT TO PAY FOR YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER AND BE ASSURED OF TOP QUALITY ACCESS? HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST...

ISP NAME AND URL	COST PER MONTH	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	SUPPORT COSTS	V 90	128K ISDN
Cablenet http://www.cablenet.net	£4.95	999	50	Standard BT	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Extra http://www.charitydays.net	£11.74	999	500	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
CIX http://www.cix.co.uk	£6.25	999	5	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
CompuServe http://www.compuserve.co.uk	£7.50	7	10	National Rate	Yes	No
Demon http://www.demon.net	£11.75	999	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Direct Connection http://www.dircon.net	£4.70	999	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Easynet http://www.easynet.co.uk	£11.99	999	999	Local Rate	Yes	No
Free-Online Lite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Kingstoninternet http://www.kingston-internet.net	£5.00	999	20	Standard BT	Yes	No
PipexDial http://www.dial.pipex.com	£15.00	12	50	National Rate	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Lite http://www.plus.net	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
SAQInternet http://www.saqnet.co.uk	£11.25	999	5	National Rate	Yes	Yes
U-NET http://www.u-net.net	£12.00	999	25	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Zoo Internet http://www.zoo.co.uk	£6.95	2	5	National Rate	Yes	No

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FREE ISP DIRECTORY

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SUBSCRIPTION-FREE ISPS WHICH CHARGE ONLY FOR LOCAL CALL PHONE RATES

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
AppleOnline http://www.appleonline.net	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Barclays Bank http://www.barclays.co.uk	5	0	No	National Rate	Yes	No
British Library Net http://www.britishlibrary.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
BT Access http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
BTopenworld Pay-as-you-go http://www.btopenworld.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Buy and Sell Net http://www.buyandsell.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Callnet UK http://www.callnetuk.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Chilly Hippo http://www.chilly-hippo.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Citibank http://www.citibank.com/uk	1	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
ClaraNET http://www.clara.net	999	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Devilnet UK http://www.devilnet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
EidosNet http://www.eidosnet.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Euphony.net http://www.euphony.net	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Eurobell http://www.eurobell.net	999	5	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
Farming Online http://www.farming.co.uk	999	0	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	999	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
Freedom 2 Surf http://www.freedom2surf.net	999	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
FreeZone http://www.freezone.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
FGayServe http://www.gayserve.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Genie Internet http://www.genie.co.uk	1	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Get Free Internet http://www.getfreeinternet.co.uk	999	5	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Get-The-Web http://www.get-the-web.com	999	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
Go-Legend http://www.go-legend.net	999	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Golfzone http://www.golfzone.co.uk	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
HMV http://hmv.yahoo.co.uk	999	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Hotlinks http://www.hotlinks.co.uk	0	0	No	National Rate	Yes	Yes
IlofM.net http://www.iofm.net	999	999	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Islam Direct http://www.islamdirect.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
JellyPeople.com http://www.jellypeople.com	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
JMadasafish http://www.madasafish.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
ManUFree.net http://www.manutd.com/manufreenet	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Max2 http://www.max2.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	Yes
Millionserve http://www.millionserve.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
NTL World http://www.ntlworld.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	No
Oceanfree http://www.oceanfree.net	999	0	No	Premium - £1.00	Yes	No
OrchidServe http://www.orchidserve.com	999	20	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
TescoNet http://www.tesco.net	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
The Hornets http://www.thehornets.net	6	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
The Mail http://www.themail.co.uk	1	50	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Tiny Online2 http://www.tinyonline.net	5	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Tiscali Classic http://www.tiscali.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Totalise http://www.totalise.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
WHSmithnet Pay As You Surf http://www.whsmith.co.uk	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
WinBiz http://www.winbiz.co.uk	0	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	No
Zoom http://www.zoom.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No

TOP BUYS

Webcams

Philips Vesto Pro

£60–70 inc VAT
www.pcstuff.phillips.com
What's good? Attractive little camera, with a good resolution. Natural colour
What's bad? It can be difficult to keep steady because the locking screw sometimes comes loose
Telephone: 0800 8689 4444
Verdict: ★★★★★

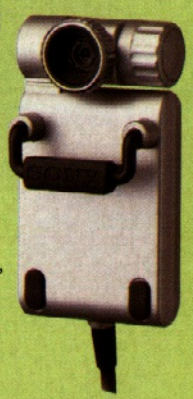
Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Creative Webcam Go Plus

£129
www.europe.creative.com
What's good? Innovative design. Can be used as a digital camera. Good range of features.
What's bad? Expensive. The digital camera aspect is a tad gimmicky
Telephone: 01245 265265
Verdict: ★★★★

Sony CMR-PC2

£89.99
www.sony.co.uk
What's good? It's tiny, yet somehow manages to squeeze in the best picture quality we've seen
What's bad? The clip does nothing whatsoever, as far as we can tell
Telephone: 0800 262 37669
Verdict: ★★★★



Logitech Quickcam Web

£59.99
www.agfa.co.uk
What's good? As cute as you like. Get free Web space and streaming with spotlife
What's bad? Average picture quality. TWAIN gremlins got under our skin
Telephone: 020 7309 0127
Verdict: ★★★

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.com/.net/.org
£12.77 1 year
£19.99 2 years

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£19.99 2 years
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Disk Space : 25Mb

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Disk Space : 50Mb

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Disk Space : 100Mb

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MS Access / MySQL
Real Streaming

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Email Boxes : 100
Data Transfer : 5Gb
£250 per year
£25 per month

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Email Boxes : 1000
Data transfer : 10Gb
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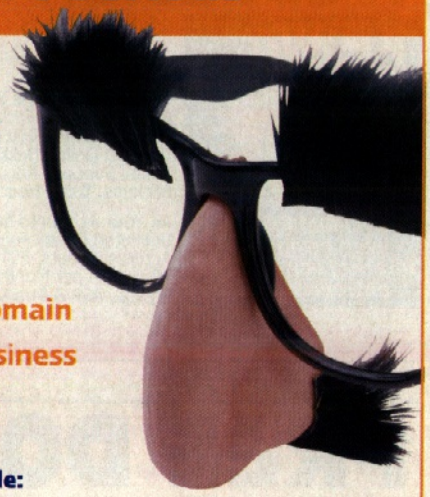

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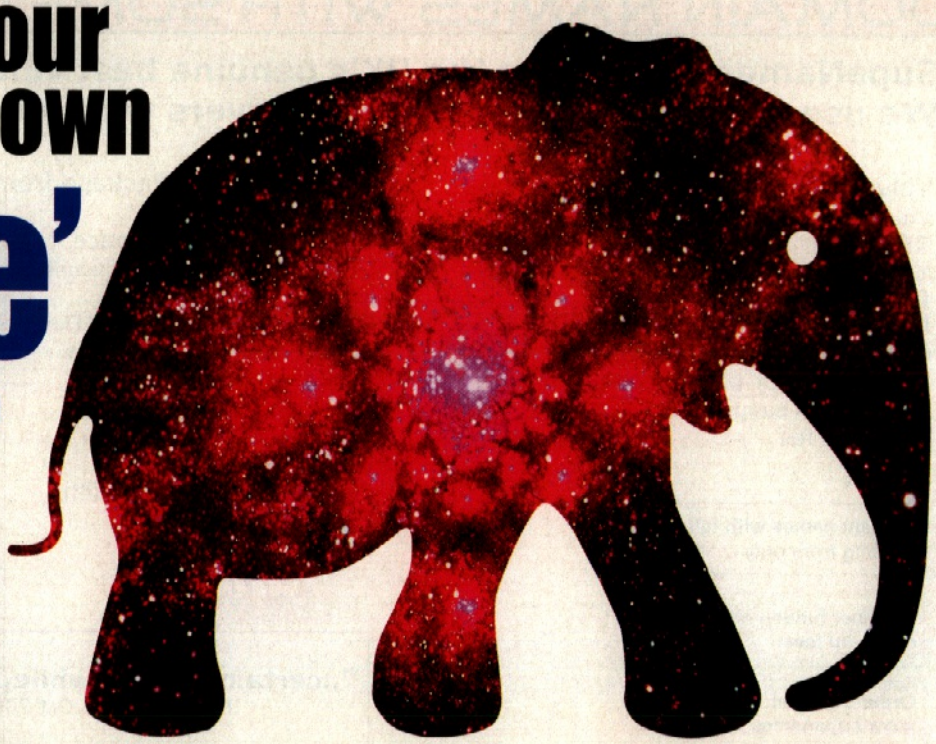

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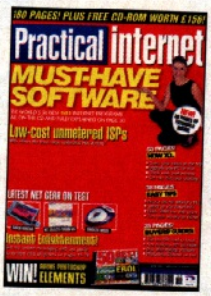

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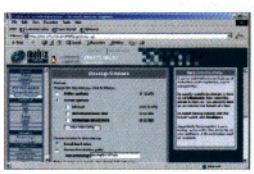
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